LITTLE ENGINES AND BIG MEN

LITTLE ENGINES AND BIG MEN

By

Gilbert A. Lathrop

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

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This book is dedicated to the memory
of those
Big Men and their Little Engines
who lived the events
which made the Story of Colorado's
Narrow Gauges possible

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LITTLE ENGINES AND BIG MEN

CHAPTER I

NARROW-GAUGE EMPIRE

The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.
—OMAR KHAYYAM

THUS the Moving Finger wrote deep into the faces of towering cliffs high in the Colorado Rockies. It drew thin lines along pine-crested flanks of mountains and scratched faint marks into valleys and through great sweeps of timber-line meadowland. It wrote into history an era of narrow-gauge railroads.

They are gone now; those valiant little thirty-six-inch lines with their toy locomotives, their plaything cars and coaches. But they opened to men and their families homes in the then inaccessible high country.

Here was an empire closed to all save the most adventuresome trapper or prospector. Here was a land filled with gold and silver and coal and timber. Millions of acres of meadowlands grew lush with mountain timothy through the summer months, timothy browsed on only by deer and elk and mountain sheep. Here was a cattle and dairy country, and ranchland.

Then came men of imagination and initiative, men like General William J. Palmer.

On October 27, 1870, under the General Railroad Law of Colorado, a company was incorporated to build a railroad from Denver to El Paso, on the Mexican border. If suitable concessions could be obtained from the government of Mexico, this line would proceed on to the capital. The distance would be in the neighborhood of 1,750 miles. Some 850 miles would be within the borders of the United States.

After much debate between two feet six inches and a thirty-six-inch gauge, it was decided to settle for the latter. Since the projected route was intended to follow the course of the Rio Grande and Del Norte rivers, it was natural that the name should indicate the initial point plus some principal objective. So it was named the Denver and Rio Grande Railway.

The first spike was driven in Denver on Friday, July 28, 1871. By August 16, with three miles of track completed, the first train was run.

On October 27, 1871, the residents of the little city of Colorado Springs, nestling at the base of Pikes Peak, turned out en masse to welcome the arrival of their first passenger train. Seventy-six miles of the new D. & R.G. Railway had been completed.

Pulling this train, resplendent in polished brass and copper trim, puffing clouds of black smoke from her diamond stack, was the Montezuma, first locomotive purchased by the new railroad. She was a neat little machine. Weighing seventeen tons, she had nine-inch cylinders and forty-inch drivers. Her wheel

arrangement was 2-4-0. Her tender had four twenty-four-inch wheels, the same size as were her pony trucks. The total length of engine and tender was thirty-five feet. The tender held five hundred gallons of water and about three tons of coal. The Montezuma was just under ten feet from rails to top of diamond stack.

By June 15, 1872, the D. & R.G. Railway had reached South Pueblo, 118 miles from Denver. Business was booming and a thirty-eight-mile branch line was built up the valley of the Arkansas River to some coal mines near what is now Canon City.

It was 1876 before the baby road built into El Moro, four miles from Trinidad. Ahead lay Raton Pass, the gateway to the Rio Grande River Valley.

In the meantime the minerally rich Leadville district was clamoring for a rail outlet. This had directed attention to an east-west line through terrain so rough that the two principal wagon routes had avoided it. The Oregon Trail had veered northward. The Santa Fe Trail was using Raton Pass to skirt the Rockies to the south.

The Denver & Rio Grande decided to follow the march of men to the west after the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, extending her standard-gauge lines westward from Topeka, Kansas, had beaten the D. & R.G. to Raton Pass, cutting the narrow-gauge line off from the south. Now the A.T. & S.F. decided to build north to Pueblo, thence westward through the Royal Gorge and on to the Pacific via Marshall Pass and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Her surveys were already run.

On April 10, 1878, the same day the D. & R.G.

graders started work at the east end of the gorge, a local subsidiary of the A.T. & S.F. showed up to start construction there. A hand-to-hand battle resulted, followed three weeks later by a U.S. Circuit Court decision upholding the A.T. & S. F. This was reversed on April 21, 1879, when the Supreme Court confirmed the rights of the D. & R.G. Six months later an agreement was reached prohibiting the Santa Fe from building west of Canon City for a period of ten years. At the same time, the Rio Grande was prohibited the right to extend its lines southward from Trinidad and from Española, New Mexico.

So the narrow gauge's destiny changed from a north-south project to that of an east-west route, with Utah and the Pacific coast as the objectives.

The Rio Grande extended its lines to Leadville, then over Tennessee Pass to Glenwood Springs. But the original main line swung south from Salida across Marshall Pass, at an elevation of 10,856 feet, and on through the Gunnison country to the confluence of that river with the Colorado at Grand Junction, near the Utah border.

In Utah, the Rio Grande Western, which was closely affiliated with the D. & R.G. received its charter in 1881.

On May 21, 1883, through passenger service was inaugurated between Denver and Ogden over the two narrow-gauge railways. Diverging branch lines in Colorado linked the D. & R.G. with the mineral and timber wealth of the San Luis and the San Juan valleys. Durango, Silverton, and Creede were the principal objectives.

By 1885 there were over thirteen hundred miles of

narrow-gauge lines in operation by the two companies. Almost every mining camp in the Colorado Rockies was served by a bustling thirty-six-inch-gauge railroad. Vast fortunes in gold and silver ore were hauled to the smelter by these diminutive carriers. Tremendous numbers of livestock were transported to market.

These railways of the past represented more than an era. They represented a way of life. Yes, they represented life itself to the hardy pioneers who made their homes along the right of ways.

If a person was stricken with serious illness, his only recourse was to order a special train, cost, fifty first-class fares, and have himself rushed to the nearest hospital.

The daily passenger trains brought news of the outside world. Strangers from distant cities dropped off to stretch their cramped legs while the little engines were watered or coaled. Whole towns turned out to greet the arrival of these daily trains.

When Silverton, Colorado, was snowed in for six weeks during the late 1890's the populace of that booming mining camp almost starved before the D. & R.G. succeeded in smashing out the slides and drifts and getting in with a relief train.

The early conductors were V.I.P.'s. Proud, indeed, was the grimy-faced boy who could boast of having been patted on the tousled head and spoken to by one of those brass-buttoned, swallow-tail-coated members of an exclusive fraternity.

Of equal importance to the lonely ranchers were the brakeman. It was these narrow-gauge railroad

men who dropped off yesterday's mail and newspapers as their trains rattled past. It was they who purchased "two spools number 60 sewing machine thread black," or "one dozen bars Denver Best Soap" and dropped them beside the path leading to the railroad. At Christmas time these same brakemen found gifts of venison, mountain trout, prime beef, and home-made sausages, and quarts of yellow cream, so thick it must be spooned from jars like jelly, waiting for them along the tracks.

There was a fraternity that was deeper than friendship between the folks who lived along the narrow gauges and the men who operated the trains. When Tom Moody, a brakeman, was killed, every rancher up and down the valley of East River drove to Gunnison to attend his funeral.

It is to acquaint you with the men and the women who worked and lived along these narrow-gauge lines that I have set myself to writing down this account. The story is primarily my father's, the late Lewis R. Lathrop, and my uncle's, the late Carl Lathrop. But it was my own good fortune to have gained much of the knowledge of those narrow-gauge engines and cars and railroads through firsthand experience.

I started as an engine watchman in the ten-stall brick roundhouse in Gunnison, Colorado, in 1913, and was promoted to brakeman in 1917, and to conductor in 1924.

During those years my father was an engineer working out of Gunnison. His service with the Denver and Rio Grande began in Chama, New Mexico, in 1882. The line from Alamosa to Durango,

Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

RIO GRANDE NARROW-GAUGE PASSENGER TRAIN DOUBLE HEADS UP MARSHALL PASS ABOUT 1935

This was before the abandonment of passenger service

over Cumbres Pass, had been built less than two years. So you might say that he and D. & R.G. narrow gauge grew up together.

Railroading is a heritage of the men of the Lathrop clan. E. R. Lathrop, my grandfather, was a carpenter with bridge and building and, later, worked in the car-repair shops of the narrow gauge in Gunnison. My uncle, Carl Lathrop, began his railroading on the D. & R.G. about the same time my dad did and later spent a lifetime of booming from one iron pike to another. I quit the narrow gauge back in 1928 and am presently an engine foreman on the Western Pacific Railroad, working in San Jose, California, while my son, Lewis, named after his grandfather, works as an engine foreman on the Southern Pacific also in San Jose. So four generations of us have made railroading our careers.

Both my father, Lewis R. Lathrop, and my uncle, Carl Lathrop, were big men, almost too big to fit comfortably into the cabs of the tiny locomotives they ran back through the 1880's, the 1890's, and the early 1900's. Dad was six feet four, broad-shouldered, sandy complected, with bright, humorous gray eyes. He had a perfect memory for detail and dates and places. He could tell of an incident out of his past with such realism that it was like being an eyewitness to it.

Uncle Carl Lathrop had brown hair and brown eyes. He was the restless one, always looking for the greener pasture just over the next hill. Like Dad's, his life was one of high adventure and excitement and romance.

The chapter devoted to the Florence and Cripple

Creek was written as he told it to me. But those devoted to the Colorado Midland Railway are as he set them down in his rather shaky scrawl—after some editing on my part.

The bulk of this narrative is my father's story, which starts unfolding in the next chapter and has been set down exactly as he told it to me.

CHAPTER II

YOUNG AMBITION

THE engineer was a sandy-complected fellow with flowing red whiskers, twinkling blue eyes, and the burr of Ireland in his speech. But to Carl Lathrop, my brother, and I, he was the greatest man in the world. From our places of concealment in a thicket of blueberry bushes we watched him go about his duties and dreamed that some day we might muster courage enough to talk to him. His locomotive had a balloon stack, a red jacket, brass bands, brass bell, and whistle. She was dolled up like a circus parade, this little eight-wheeler which came whoofing up to the limekiln every afternoon to set out empty cars and pick up loaded ones. The time was October, 1875.

Our father and mother complained about the poor grades Carl and I received from the teacher in the one-room, log-cabin school. Fortunately, they never learned the reason. Growing boys do not learn the three R's playing hooky so they can watch railroad trains.

The locomotive was a wood burner and four-foot lengths of black walnut, oak, and other hardwoods were always piled high in her tender.

I expect our secret watching of the engine and her engineer had been going on for several weeks before I, being the elder by three years, ventured out in the open one day and boldly marched up to the engineer. He surveyed me with humorous eyes, noted my bare feet, my homespun clothes, and the dumb adoration in my eyes.

"Could my brother and I ride on your engine?" I asked timidly.

The engineer laughed, nodded his head affirmatively, and replied, "If yez are willin' to pay by helpin' wood up, an' water up, yez can ride, an' welcome."

Two boys who would not have traded places with anybody in the whole world clambered up into the open deck of that tiny engine to seats on the wing of the tender. Two pairs of eyes watched the engineer take a stand on his side, look out for a signal, pull two blasts on his whistle cord, and then tug out his throttle. Two hearts thumped like trip hammers at the excitement of it all.

The fireman was a burly young fellow who disdained to wear gloves, although those knotted chunks of wood were full of splinters. His palms were so calloused that thick splinters would not penetrate them. We watched while he tossed several lengths of black walnut into the flames. Today, with black walnut almost priceless, so rare has it become, it seems a crime that millions of cords of it were used as fuel for locomotives.

We rolled along at a snail's pace. After a while the engineer halted with his engine sitting on a short wooden bridge. A crystal-clear stream of water flowed beneath.

"Here's where we water up," he informed us as he began digging buckets from a locker built in the tender.

The conductor and brakemen came over. Engineer, fireman, Carl, and I piled off. Together we formed a bucket brigade. The engineer straddled the stream and began dipping up brimming pails which he passed to the next man above, who in turn passed them on until they were finally handed the fireman who stood by the manhole on the tender. Full buckets went up and empty buckets came down. In an amazingly short time the tender was filled.

Once more we thrilled to the motion of the engine. After several miles the engineer halted again. This time we were beside a long rick of black walnut sawed into four-foot lengths and hauled close to the track by some farmer. The railroad company paid two dollars and fifty cents a cord for what we took on the tender. The engineer left a written receipt for it. Carl and I helped wood up.

It was almost dark when the engineer told us, "Yez had better be unloadin' an' hikin' home 'fore your parents get worrited."

As clearly etched in my memory as though it happened but yesterday is that ride, the watering up, the wooding up, and the long tramp home through the darkness.

Suddenly Carl stopped me. His eyes glistened in the faint starlight. "Lew," he said, his voice quivering with excitement, "when I grow up I'm gonna be a railroad engineer!"

"So am I," I stated with finality.

That night ambition was born in the breasts of two boys. I was twelve years old, Carl nine.

Our parents were "worrited" long before Carl and I came dragging home close to midnight. The scolding we received fell on deaf ears because we still tingled from our first great adventure.

The place was in the Dominion of Canada, near a village called Coldrain. From there to the very heart of the Rocky Mountains, out in the newly settled West, in Colorado and New Mexico, was a long jump. But that is where Carl and I finally began our railroad careers.

I was born in Coldrain on October 4, 1863, and named Lewis Reid Lathrop. My parents' home had originally been in Boston, Massachusetts, and they and their parents before them were staunch Yankees. Shortly before the Civil War my father moved to Canada where he purchased a farm. We children wore homespun garments made by our mother. We burned candles which we had molded of evenings. I learned to tap sugar trees and to cook the sap into maple sirup and sugar. Summers we gathered the wild berries, with which the countryside abounded.

There were four of us children, three boys and one girl.

I'm afraid Father was a poor farmer. He managed to eke a living out of his place, and he built a home on it. The home was constructed of hardwoods, whipsawed from timber he cut from his land. Not a nail was used in building the house. All joints were mortised and tenoned. Unless fire has since razed the place I'm sure it is still standing, and still as solid as the day it was finished.

Down in Emporia, Kansas, U.S.A., my father had a brother who operated a soap factory. The brother wrote in such glowing terms of the opportunities offered by this new country that Father sold out his farm and headed south and west. We crossed Lake Michigan and landed in Chicago in 1879.

From there we took a train on the Kansas and Pacific Railway. Our locomotive was another wood burner. Railroad travel was anything but a pleasure. The seats in the open-vestibule, wooden coaches were not upholstered. The trains were crowded. No great speed was made. But we finally reached our destination.

I was a strapping young fellow, sixteen years old. My uncle immediately put me to work in his soap factory. I was given charge of a steam boiler of ancient vintage. We carried from five to twenty pounds of steam, enough to render grease from the various animals, and parts of animals, my uncle was given or purchased. I've seen loads of hams and bacons dumped off to be made into soap, and they were fresh and as good as what we pay fancy prices for these days. But there was an oversupply of meat of all kinds. Buffalo still dotted the plains. Antelope were plentiful. To the west were deer and elk and mountain sheep. Nature was too bountiful and man was too greedy.

My uncle knew as little about a steam boiler as did I. All I knew was that a fire placed beneath a vessel of water would finally make steam. One day I tried the gauge cocks on the boiler. Dry steam hissed from each one. I noticed that the boiler looked funny, but that meant nothing to me. I concluded water was

needed, so I put on the inspirator. After having worked around high-pressure steam over half a century, I realize God was watching out for me that day. When the cold water struck those red-hot plates, steam began blowing from the safety valve, from every seam, from every leaky valve, and the boiler visibly swelled. But that was all, and when the water was high enough to run from the top gauge cock I turned it off, confident that I had done a good job.

My father got work on a bridge and building gang on the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad. Every time he came home for a short visit his whole conversation was of the great things which were happening out in Colorado. Railroads were building into the Rocky Mountains. They were gouging roadbeds from mile-deep canyons, laying rails and ties over the top of the Continental Divide, where trail blazers had claimed it an impossibility. Men were at a premium; wages were high. Yes, my father's feet were itching.

The Santa Fe had built a new locomotive in their Topeka shops. Everybody was talking about her tremendous size, speed, and power. The day we heard the new engine was finally going through Emporia all of us hurried to the depot. Nearly every man, woman, and child was there ahead of us. Even our modern streamliners do not command the amount of curiosity this locomotive did.

When she finally came chuffing into town, pulling quite a string of passenger coaches, we caught our breath. She was a monster, with eight wheels, two pairs of high drivers and two pairs of pony trucks. The drivers were a good six feet in diameter. She had

Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

PRESENT-DAY RIO GRANDE STANDARD-GAUGE MAIN LINE THROUGH THE ROYAL GORGE OF THE ARKANSAS

Drawn by The Royal Gorge, daily streamliner between Denver and Salt Lake City; the Hanging Bridge is in the lower background and the world's highest suspension bridge at the upper right.

a wagon-top boiler and was garish with copper and brass decorations. When she halted at the depot, her engineer, a fat, sober-faced young fellow, dropped off with his long oiler while the fireman posed in the cab window for all to admire. I heard the engine was highly successful, running up an enviable speed as well as an impressive tonnage record.

Father was not long in saving enough money to head for Denver, Colorado. He decided to leave Mother, my sister, and Carl in Emporia until he and I were settled on steady jobs.

Sadness had come to us in Emporia when my eldest brother, Henry, caught typhoid fever and died. At that time the doctors believed it was fatal to give a feverish patient a drink of water. Henry begged hour after hour for a tiny sip of liquid. I'm convinced that he died from thirst as much as from typhoid.

Father and I rode the Santa Fe from Emporia to Denver. It was a long, uncomfortable journey. The wooden coaches were crowded. The seats were hard and the roadbed was rough. The year was 1881.

Denver was little more than an overgrown town. In dry weather the streets were knee-deep in dust and waist-deep in mud when it rained.

The morning after our arrival we went to the general offices of the narrow-gauge Denver and Rio Grande Railway. We had no trouble getting jobs.

"We need men to build snowsheds and snow fences, over on Cumbres Pass," we were told. Passes as far as Pueblo were issued to us.

"When you get to Pueblo transportation to Cumbres will be given you," a clerk told us.

It seemed every able-bodied man in the country was heading toward Pueblo. Steel mills were being built there. There were plenty of jobs of all kinds.

That same day we had our first look at narrow-gauge engines and cars. We saw the Montezuma, the first locomotive purchased by the D. & R.G. But now she was used as a switch engine, having proven too light for main-line service.

After the standard-gauge tracks over which we had journeyed, this narrow gauge looked almost too small for practical use. The thirty-five-pound rails were laid thirty-six inches apart. The four-wheeled boxcar and coal cars were ten tons capacity. They were equipped with link and pin couplings and straight air brakes. The coaches were quite elaborate.

The Jackson and Sharp Company of Wilmington, Delaware, built the first narrow-gauge coach in America for the D. & R.G. It was thirty-five feet long, seven feet wide, and weighed fifteen thousand pounds. The red, plush seats were double on one side, single on the other. This arrangement was reversed in the center so that each side carried half double, half single seats, securing a perfect balance of weight when the car was full.

The double seats were thirty-six inches wide, the single, nineteen. The aisle was seventeen inches. Ornate, silver-plated oil lamps were suspended from the ceiling. The interior was heated by two fancy coal stoves, one in each end. The glass in the clerestory was every color of the rainbow. Cherry, walnut, and ash were used in the interior. The coach seated thirty-six passengers.

The open vestibules had Miller platforms and

couplings. Westinghouse air brakes were standard equipment.

The D. & R.G. had recently ordered a number of first-class coaches eight feet wide and forty-one feet long. These had fourteen windows to a side and two in each end. They carried twenty-five double seats. On order were also some tourist sleepers and some Pullmans so passengers could rest during the long nights while their trains crept over the mountain passes or wound through mile-deep canyons.

The train on which we were riding to Pueblo finally pulled out. It contained seven coaches pulled by two diminutive locomotives blowing smoke rings from diamond stacks. How I envied the crews in the cabs. How I wanted to get into engine service. I realized I was making my first step toward the coveted goal, going to work on the railroad as a carpenter's helper.

CHAPTER III

WE BUILD A HOME

OUR passes were not waiting for us when we arrived in the brawling, roistering new town of Pueblo. Every rooming house and hotel was filled with guests. There were no rooms of any kind to be had. The boardwalks were thronged with people until late at night and one must wait his turn to get into an eating house.

One progressive individual had purchased a circus tent and pitched it on a vacant block. He had bought single cots with straw ticks and set them as close together as possible. He rented these cots for twenty-five cents per night, the renter to furnish his own bedding. Since a bedroll was a part of the regular equipment of almost every man, this entailed no hardship.

Father and I rented cots our first night in Pueblo. When a thousand-odd men began snoring in unison the din was horrible. Added to that, the place literally crawled with bedbugs. After tossing and tumbling sleeplessly all night, we decided to get our rest under the pale stars while we waited for our transportation to arrive.

We got our passes a week later. They read "Pueblo to Osier." We boarded a narrow-gauge passenger and were hauled south and west, toward Alamosa.

The station of Osier proved to be a section house and a saloon on Cumbres Pass. A string of outfit cars occupied a sidetrack and Father and I were assigned bunks. A man who ran a flock of sheep had built a log building. The front was a barroom, the back his living quarters. He did a good business evenings when the gangs of bridgemen, carpenters, and other workers were through for the day.

Father and I started working on September 12, 1881. The job lasted well into November, when the railway company began cutting off men. Being a boy I was among the first ones dismissed from service. But father was retained. With a steady job he decided to send for the rest of the family. The railroad company obligingly gave him transportation for them from Emporia, Kansas, to Chama, New Mexico.

A place for them to live presented our biggest problem. Father and I had both saved some money so we decided to build a home. Accordingly, Father approached the supervisor of bridge and building.

"I'd like to buy enough building material to put up a house in Chama," began Father.

"We won't sell you a stick of lumber," said the supervisor. "But," he added with a smile, "I'll give you an order for all the stuff you'll need and it won't cost you a cent!"

Big companies were like that, those early days. They realized their workers were human beings, and anything to make the going a little easier was cheerfully done.

Chama was not incorporated. No one owned the land. It was free for the taking. So we picked a choice site for our new home. Father, Carl, and I went to work and in a short time we completed a snug little three-room house. The total cost to us was our labor.

Chama was a new town. Tents and false-fronted buildings lined the main street. It was a railroad town. The Chama River flowed through the lower end, clear as a crystal and literally alive with native trout. Nobody fished for them because other game was so plentiful. Wild turkeys roamed into town and strutted down the boardwalks, while grouse, sage chicken, antelope, deer, ducks, and geese were to be had for the taking.

A gangling young fellow who was always trying out some new idea worked in the roundhouse as engine watchman. One day he called me over and showed me several fishhooks with bright-colored feathers tied to them.

"I been wonderin' if a feller couldn't catch some of them trout out of Chama River with one of these?" he told me.

I was dubious. No trout with an ounce of brains would snap at one of those idiotic creations. I told him as much.

"Well," he said, "I ain't tried 'em out yet, but if you got a minute or two we'll take a walk down to the river an' give 'em a whirl."

I accompanied him. He cut a willow pole, tied a line to the end of it, and one of his "fly" hooks to the other end of the line. His first cast brought a beautiful fifteen-inch native leaping from the water and giving

a savage tug on his hook. He horsed the wriggling fish over his head. While I dispatched it, he cast in again. In almost nothing flat he had caught eight of those big natives on an artificial lure. I've wondered since if he wasn't the first man who ever caught a mess of trout from our Western waters on a fly hook.

Most of my spare time was spent at the roundhouse admiring the diminutive locomotives. All of the engines bore names as well as numbers. Among them were the 26, named Rio Bravo, and the 91, named Ten Mile. Both pulled passenger trains between Chama and Durango, over Cumbres Pass. Two others, the 36, named San Juan, and the 89, named Eagle River, worked between Chama and Alamosa.

All four of them were 4-4-0 wheel arrangement. Their drivers were forty-five inches in diameter. They had oil headlights and diamond stacks. They weighed about twenty tons each and were built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1878 and 1880. The interiors of their cabs were of inlaid hardwoods in geometric designs. The crews assigned to them were proud of their charges and spent most of their time while off duty polishing and tinkering on them.

They were beautiful little machines and I've often thought it a shame one or two of them were not saved from the scrap pile and made museum pieces.

I had put in my application for a job in the roundhouse, but it was not until 1882 that I was called. Both Carl and I were hired to wipe engines. Wiping engines was not a mere matter of giving the little engines a lick and a promise. After we had worked several hours on a certain locomotive, the foreman

would walk officiously up and pull a white handkerchief from his pocket. He would swab this over running gear, jacket, or inside the wheels, or any place his fancy dictated. If it came away smudged it was too bad for the wipers. The railroad company took great pride in their engines.

The big explosion occurred while we were working in the roundhouse. The storage house and yard were near the tracks. Several tons of giant powder were piled in the storehouse. One night the giant powder let loose. Every windowpane in Chama was shattered. Tools, block and tackle, canned foodstuffs, and all kinds of railroad equipment were blown over the surrounding hills. A pit large enough to hold a good-sized house was left where the building had stood.

For weeks afterward Carl and I found tobacco, canned foods, tools, and other stuff which we carted home and used.

I had just turned nineteen, while Carl was three years my junior. I was six feet four and my brother was almost as tall. As a matter of fact, I was never able to stand erect in the cabs of the narrow-gauge engines in which I spent most of my life.

The roundhouse was just a steppingstone to a road job; no young fellow worth his salt would think of remaining there any longer than necessary. Our envy of those glamorous narrow-gauge engineers and firemen had a firm foundation in reality. We knew—now that we were actually working in the roundhouse—that it would not be long before we, too, would be sitting up in a cab, rolling over the rails behind a

chuffing diamond stack. The realization added zest to our ambition as an appetizer whips an edge to a man's hunger. Those were days of bright and shining hope, when any man of imagination could revel in dreams that had a chance of coming true.

Larry Heatherman, a young Scotchman in his twenties, who ran a passenger train between Chama and Alamosa, was my favorite engineer. He was small, but very well built. His eyebrows, big eyes, and mustache were all coal-black, as though they had been dyed out of the same pot. Larry was practically in love with his 36, the San Juan. She was graceful, light on her feet, and painted and decorated with dazzling effect. Her sand dome and steam dome were sheathed in shiny brass, as were her cylinders. Copper piping set off her gray, Russia-iron jacket.

The mail and baggage cars were illuminated after dark by sperm-oil candles—when pilfering enginemen did not steal them all. Those sperm-oil candles made the finest kind of polish for bringing out the sheen on brass and copper and the Russia iron that trimmed the locomotives. The mail clerks and baggagemen used to curse every time darkness settled over their trains and they started to light the sperm-oil candles that were no longer there.

Both trainmen and enginemen were predominantly Irish. Good sturdy stock, the burr of the "Auld Sod" in their speech, quick to fight, equally quick to forgive, these happy-go-lucky sons of Erin. Irish stock had built the roadbed for the D. & R.G., were still gouging a right of way from thousand-foot-high cliffs, running steel and ties through sidehill cuts and spanning canyons with their wooden trestles. Their

handiwork was good, because today, after almost eighty years, much of it remains, although little of it is in use.

Mike Smith was an ancient in a land of youth. He was getting close to forty. He fired the 26, the Rio Bravo, in passenger service. Mike had refused promotion to engineer when it was offered to him after he had fired about three months because he was disgusted with running locomotives. He had come to Chama from the Denver, South Park and Pacific, another narrow gauge that will be told about later in this story. Mike had been an engineer on the D.S.P. & P. He told me all about it.

One day Mike's engine sheared off a steel key between the crosshead and the piston. Fortunately, she did not knock out a cylinder head. Mike decided the trouble could be corrected easily enough. He got an oak wedge from his engine and whittled it to a snug fit. Then he drove it in to replace the steel key. Everything went along smoothly until they reached the bottom of Trout Creek Pass. There Mike hauled his throttle open. The wooden key proved unequal to the strain with the result the cylinder head was knocked into the next county and his engine was stripped of side rods. So he was fired.

Mike was a fanatic about his 26. All engine crews were responsible for maintaining their locomotives and keeping them clean and shiny, so he was the worst sperm-oil candle thief working on the railroad. His 26 was the cleanest engine on it. Mike almost lived on her when he was off duty.

My brother, Carl, was quite fastidious. Wiping

grease and grime from the narrow-gauge engines did not appeal to him. He fretted and stewed about having to "live with my hair full of cellar grease" until none of us could stand him around. But he was ambitious and in a short time he promoted himself from wiping engines to a job as switchman in the Chama yards. He was only past sixteen! Which gives some idea of the scarcity of men in those roaring days of the roaring road. Carl made good as a switchman because he had plenty of nerve, plenty of ambition, and plenty of gray matter under his thatch of brown hair.

I had but a single objective and that was to get out on the road as a fireman. My opportunity to get a scoop shovel in my hands and do a job of firing came almost before I was prepared. I had worked as a wiper about two months and was just finishing up my twelve-hour shift when the night roundhouse foreman, a tall, hungry-looking fellow with a luxurious crop of whiskers, came storming into the roundhouse shouting my name. When I answered, he said, "Get the 43 ready for service, Lew. I'll have to use you for my fireman. We've got to go up to Cumbres Pass as quick as we can!"

Only by an effort did I keep from snatching off my hat, waving it overhead, and yelling for joy. I would not have traded places with any man living that morning. I wasted no time filling the grease cups and making sure the tallow pot was full. The foreman climbed into the cab and we put the 43, named Copper Gulch, across the turntable. At the depot the pilot and the back end of the tender were piled

high with boxes of food. Cumbres Pass had been snowed in most of the winter and only opened to traffic again the day before. The crew of section men—there were fifty of them, all brawny Irishmen —were entirely out of food. No food, no work, so we were delegated to get to them as quickly as possible.

The foreman went out of town with that little diamond-stack 2-8-0 consolidated-freight engine really cutting her fire. I took up the scoop and opened the firebox door. A dazzling, white-hot glare blinded me. I was convinced that unless I got busy right now, the whole trip would be over through lack of fuel. I baled coal until I could see black above the white glare. Then I edged into my side of the cab. Instead of 130 pounds, maximum steam pressure, the gauge showed only 110, and the needle was moving downward.

Not enough coal in her yet, I decided, and dropped down and toiled some more. It was not until unburned coal rolled out the fire door that I ceased. I edged into the cab again. The foreman was eying the steam gauge which was down to 90, mumbling to himself. He left his side of the cab and opened the fire door. Half-burned coal poured out on the steel apron and he started to curse. The firebox was filled to the crown sheet. The foreman slammed the door closed. "If you put another shovel of coal in that firebox before I tell you, I'll break your neck," he bellowed across to me.

We went the fourteen miles from Chama to Cumbres without my having to handle another pound of coal and the pressure was only beginning to come up when we stopped in front of the section house.

CHAPTER IV

INDIANS

BETWEEN Chama and Durango, the D. & R.G. ran through two Indian reservations, the Navajo and the Ute. Ignacio was chief of the Navajo, and we had a station named for him. Because the railroad right of way crossed the two reservations the company had agreed to carry all Indians free, but reserved the right to put them off passenger trains. This was often necessary, for the Navajos had no regard for personal hygiene and usually packed a colony of graybacks in their long hair. Even the freight crews kept them off cabooses and engines, making them ride the tops of the boxcars, or on flatcars.

All I knew about Indians was what I had read in nickel novels. I figured they still thirsted for white scalps and still got a kick out of burning and torturing their victims at the stake. There were some grounds for my ideas of Indians. Every engine operating through the reservations carried a Sharps .45-.70 rifle fastened to the inside of the cab above the engineer's head, to be used in case of an uprising. I never heard of one of those rifles being put to use except to knock down an antelope, or a coyote.

There was a work train on the line in the Ute reservation. The roundhouse foreman sent me down there as engine watchman. The engine was numbered 13. She was a sister to the Montezuma and her cab was so small only two men could get inside. I arrived that night just in time to take over my duties. There were Indians everywhere, some covered with blankets, but the majority naked save for a breechclout. Those Indians could not get over marveling at the wonders of a locomotive and I had barely got inside the cab when half a hundred bucks came up and surrounded her, gazing raptly at the wheels, guides, the rods, and various other parts. Not one of them touched her. For my part, I was scared half to death and could picture my scalp decorating a belt. It was hotter than blazes down there. But with me it was safety first. I closed all the cab windows, pulled down the curtains, and locked the doors. The Indians left in an hour or so, but for the balance of the night—save when I had to toss a few scoops of coal in the firebox—I stayed in the cab and almost roasted.

In April, 1882, I was promoted to fireman. I was assigned to engine number 57, named Chalk Creek. The 57 was a Baldwin Consolidated. She had one pair of twenty-four-inch pony-truck wheels and four pairs of thirty-six-inch drivers. The two inside pairs of drivers were "blind," meaning they had no flanges. She carried a crosshead water pump on her right side and to lubricate the slide valves the engineer shut off steam and allowed her to drift while he took his tallow pot and went through the front cab door and out on the running board. He poured valve oil into the release valves. Suction created by the motion pulled

the oil into the valves and cylinders. There were no lubricators on our engines.

If the water in the boiler was too low to allow an engineer to shut his throttle when stopping to fill the tender with water, the fireman snatched up the long oiler and raced ahead to oil the rails so the drivers would keep turning, thus operating the crosshead pump without the engine moving forward.

The 57 was a freight hauler and her engineer was Jerry McNerney, a smart little Irishman. Lively and witty, it was a pleasure to work with him. As far as that goes, most of the boys were fine fellows. We were bound by a common brotherhood, the pioneer feeling, and were slow to offend and as slow to be offended. Only one man, as I remember, rubbed me the wrong way, and vice versa. He was a new engineer—I do not even recall his name now. But he was the kind who takes a single look at a man and knows he does —or does not—like him. In this instance the feeling was mutual.

After we started our trip, I knew I was right. He was working too much water in the boiler, and she boiled over several times, throwing a whitewash of alkali all over the jacket. It was lucky we did not knock out a cylinder head. I had a hard time keeping up steam pressure. It is impossible to find space for steam in a boiler full of hot water.

The last time she boiled over he tore into me. "If you don't keep her hot," he shouted across the boiler, "I'll turn you in when we get to Chama."

"If you didn't work your water four gauges in the smoke stack, I could keep her hot," I yelled back at him.

He seemed stunned at my boldness. When we arrived in Chama he went to the master mechanic and reported me. Engineers were supreme. Nine times out of ten it was the end for a fireman when an engineer turned him in. I figured I would be fired anyhow. So when I was called into the official's office I spoke out in no uncertain terms. I told the master mechanic to look at the jacket of our engine for proof of my statements.

To my surprise he did so. When he came back he informed the engineer, "If you ever bring another engine into town looking like that one, you, and not your fireman, will lose your job."

That was my last trip firing for him because he left shortly afterward.

We worked by the day, and there was no payment for overtime. It took nine hours for a freight train to cover the sixty-five miles between Chama and Alamosa, and that was a day's work. From Chama to Durango was 107 miles and it demanded nine to fifteen hours, but that, too, was a day's work. Translated into money, $4.00 was a day's pay for an engineer, $2.40 for a fireman. Brakemen and conductors were paid by the month, $62.50 for the former and a flat $100 for the latter. In addition, the engine crews performed all minor repairs and kept their locomotives so clean there was not a speck of grease on them.

As a fireman I came in contact with both the Ute and the Navajo Indians. It was remarkable how different these two tribes were. The Navajos seemed

to have no conception of cleanliness. They ate almost any kind of food, with dog a favorite. On the days the Indian agent at Fargo butchered cattle for them, there was always a fight between the women for the entrails, and the winner usually piled her spoils on her head and waddled off in great content.

The Utes, on the other hand, were scrupulously clean. Some of the girls were beautiful. For both tribes, this can be said: They were the most moral peoples I have ever known. A few of the maidens resembled the pictures we see of princesses. They had high cheekbones, but their features were as delicate as though carved from obsidian. Rosy cheeks, full lips, and slender bodies. Had I not been working such long hours, and had I been less bashful, I would have fallen for them. The white, female sex in that newly settled country consisted of coarse, bleary-eyed, painted ladies who lived in apartments over the saloons; and fat, motherly Irish housewives whose husbands worked on the railroad.

A young fellow who held a job as water pumper at Ignacio fell in love with a pretty Ute girl. Their romance was moving along at a fast clip when her visits to him suddenly stopped. For a couple of weeks he did not see her. One day she returned. Both of her ears had been cut off close to her head. This was her punishment for indulging in romance with a white man—this, and expulsion from her tribe. She hung around town for several months, then disappeared.

One day during the following fall two bucks boarded our freight train as we were pulling out of Ignacio. They sat down on top of a boxcar about four cars behind our engine. It was a raw, blustery

day and the pair were clad only in breechclouts. Before we had gone two miles I saw them crawling toward our engine.

By the time they reached the head end of the head car they were half frozen. When they finally caught my eye they asked me by gestures if they could come down out of the cold. I nodded my head affirmatively. They soon came crawling over the coal pile and stopped back from the boiler head, where they began warming their hands. I gave them to understand they must remain in the tender.

After a short time the warmth made them drowsy. They stretched out in the coal pile and went to sleep. We were rolling right along with a slight downgrade in our favor. At certain speeds those little tenders would shimmy. The 57 began doing a jelly roll, and as she bounced the coal shook down, carrying the two bucks along with it. I grew interested, knowing what was going to happen unless they woke up in time to avoid it. Closer and closer to the hot boiler head came their naked buttocks. Finally, one of them settled against it. But not for long. There came a sudden whoop which shook the cab. The two Indians leaped to their feet, pawing at the coal as they scrambled over it. They did not halt until they were on the second car behind our engine. The one was tenderly rubbing at his scorched anatomy with one hand and shaking the other toward us. They were sure we were responsible for burning one of them. During the balance of the trip they went through the motions of cutting my throat, or scalping me, every time I looked back at them.

As the weather grew colder that fall the Indians began coming to Chama. All of us felt sorry for them, the bucks particularly. If they only had trousers to cover their legs they would have been more comfortable. Finally, a meeting was called. Every man who owned a cast-off pair of trousers was asked to donate them to the shivering Indians. Over a hundred pair were thus brought in and at an impressive ceremony they were presented to the red men. Most of them left town that day wearing trousers for the first time in their lives. All of us felt quite philanthropical.

Imagine our feelings then, when the next time the bucks came to town we found every one of them had cut the seat out of his trousers—for purposes of sanitation!

Most of the railroad men were hard drinkers. But they handled their liquor well and there were few accidents caused by alcohol. With all that firewater around the Indians had to have their share. Now, a drunken Indian was a bad, dangerous Indian, as the government agents knew very well. So they took steps to keep alcoholic drinks away from their charges. No Indian was allowed inside a saloon. None of them could purchase intoxicants in bottles. But they were not so dumb. Most of the bucks had acquired double-barreled shotguns. One of them would walk up to the back door of a saloon. After leaning his shotgun against the wall and placing a silver dollar on top of the barrel, he would knock on the door, then stroll off. The saloonkeeper would carry the gun inside where he would fill both barrels with whisky, after which he would set it back where he had found it. It was no

strange sight to see half a dozen bucks with shotguns sticking straight in the air, wrong end up, their heads tipped back as they swigged out of one or the other barrel of the guns.

Eventually the agents stopped this practice.

Late one afternoon a cowpuncher came loping over the hill on an exhausted horse. He threw himself off and ran up to our engine. We were on a work train between Chama and Durango at the time.

"Hey, you fellers," he yelled through cupped hands. "The Indians have went on the warpath an' are ridin' hell-fer-leather in this direction. You'd better vamoose, quick, or they'll have your scalps!"

Knowing we were unprepared to meet the Indians on any kind of an equal footing, we were plenty worried. There was no gun on the work-train engine.

"Get everything ready to haul freight at a minute's notice," the cowpuncher went on. "I'll try an' let you know in plenty of time, so yuh c'n make a quick getaway." Then he was gone.

Our conductor ran over to the telegraph office, where he sent an urgent message to the superintendent. He got an immediate reply. "Have everything ready to pull out at a moment's notice," it read. "Load all women and children on caboose. All men keep close at hand, ready to board when warning given."

We switched our engine, several cars of material, and the caboose out on the main line. I made certain the boiler had a full head of steam. Dusk crept over the scene. Minutes dragged into hours with no sign of the warring Indians. We waited all night for

the cowpuncher to ride in with his warning. Morning found the scene peaceful. About the time we should go to work a message arrived. The Indians had gone on the warpath but had swung around us and followed the Rio Grande Valley south, burning farmhouses and killing several people before some U.S. troops caught up with them.

That was our only trouble with Indians. They were peaceful people on the whole. Both bucks and squaws were straight as ramrods and could shame the posture of some of our present Americans. It was said their erectness came from being strapped to boards when they were babies. I figured it was probably that, coupled with the way the women, particularly, carried heavy burdens on their heads.

CHAPTER V

WESTERN OUTLAWS

CHAMA needed a good boardinghouse. Some of the food the railroaders were forced to eat was terrible. Not over half a dozen of them were married, so a real opportunity was offered anyone who would open a first-class boardinghouse. Since I lived with my folks the quality of outside meals did not bother me.

The widow came to Chama from somewhere in Massachusetts. She rented a sizable house and furnished it for roomers and boarders. But she arrived in our town with a misconceived idea of Westerners. She had heard and believed that all of them were like the Indians, uncivilized, uncouth, and dangerous to be around.

Engineer George Porter, who hailed from Vermont, and Jerry McNerney, my engineer, were the first ones to present themselves as prospective boarders and roomers. The pair of young hellions had heard about the widow's opinion of Westerners. Both were handsome young men who wore curled mustaches, as was the style. George acted as spokesman. He made his voice silky and low and slurred his *r*'s.

"I am very particular as to who rooms and boards in my house," she informed them stiffly. "But you seem perfect gentlemen."

George launched into a discourse on his and McNerney's backgrounds, stressed their aversion to the crudities of the Wild West, and enlarged on their happiness that some culture, in the form of the widow, had finally come to reside in Chama. Obviously impressed, she told them she would take them under her roof.

"You may move your things in this afternoon and have supper here," she invited.

The pair moved their trunks in and settled down to enjoy some home life. Now, George and Jerry had gained distinction up and down the railroad through an unique ability. Most of the gang made it a practice to see who could drink his coffee hottest when they gathered in section houses and other eating places. The pair of young engineers had walked off with top honors, for they were able to down a full cup bubbling from the stove.

Jerry always carried a long-bladed clasp knife, which he used for skinning the occasional antelope or deer he killed from his cab window.

Promptly at 6:00 P.M. the widow called the pair to supper. They came down, dressed in their Sunday best, clean-shaven, and mustaches waxed. Crystal glassware gleamed against a snowy tablecloth in the orange illumination cast by a hanging oil lamp. The widow had done herself proud. Each place had a napkin and silverware.

George looked from Jerry to the napkins. Jerry's eyes began to twinkle devilishly. Next, Jerry picked

up his napkin and stuffed it into his shirt collar while George followed suit. The widow's eyes widened, but she made no comment. A hired girl brought their food and placed it on the table. There was a large platter of roast beef, of which each man took a liberal helping. Then George turned to Jerry.

"Loan me your clasp knife, Jerry," he said.

Jerry fished it out, snapped the blade open, and gave it to George. The knife in his right hand, George grabbed up a slice of roast beef with his left, shoved it in his mouth and then, at the risk of chopping off a piece of his chubby nose, neatly sliced the meat in two.

"Give me my knife," Jerry told George, who was chewing in placid contentment. George handed him the knife and Jerry operated on his beef in the same manner.

Next, George took up his cup of coffee, tilted it, and, although it was still steaming hot, gulped it down like it were so much ice water and he were thirsty. Jerry followed suit. George smiled toward the widow. "My coffee was pretty cool. Could I have it warmer next time?"

"Mine, too," put in Jerry.

By this time the widow was completely horrified. Her ideas of Westerners had been right in the first place. Her new boarders had seemed perfect gentlemen until they came to the table. Now their true background had come out.

"You'll have to move your things from my house," she told them. "I couldn't think of allowing two such ill-mannered persons under my roof."

Now that they had overdone things, they wanted to board and room there, because this meal proved the

widow knew how to cook. It took much argument, persuasion, and begging to get her to relent. And for weeks the pair came to the table under probation.

The country was pretty lawless. I saw plenty of shootings. Once I watched a tinhorn gambler kill a Swede laborer over some girl without the tinhorn being arrested. The saloons ran wide open, twenty-four hours a day.

Money was money and there were no paper certificates. All legal tender was in coin, the smallest acceptable unit a quarter. My sister began playing in the sawdust of an abandoned saloon behind our home. There was no floor in the building and the sawdust was about a foot deep. In less than a week she picked up over fifteen dollars, including a five-dollar gold piece. I've wished since that we had sifted the sawdust. It would probably have yielded close to a hundred dollars, money dropped by the former patrons and left there.

The narrow gauge ran a monthly pay car and paid all employees in gold. I've seen gold pieces stacked two feet high on the counter. Gold and silver money, but representing real value. We had no use for paper. Paper money could be printed too easily to represent much value, we thought. Gold and silver were tangible, palpable, ponderable. They had to be dug from flint-hard stone, at the expense of sweat and blood.

Everybody loved money, and not the least formidable of its lovers were the outlaw gangs that roamed the land when I was a fireman. There were half a dozen of them, rustling, pillaging, burning, killing. You've heard their names—the Daltons, the James

boys, the Quantrells. Quantrell's men were perhaps the bloodiest. Although the original Quantrell is reputed to have started the James boys on their career of crime, he was killed after the close of the Civil War. This Quantrell who harrassed the settlers of New Mexico was probably a relative who took the name, through pride, as his successor. His gang had pillaged and robbed during construction of the Union Pacific and, when things became too hot for him, he had moved with his gang to New Mexico. Today a number of families bearing the name of Quantrell live around Chama, while a number of direct descendents of the Daltons are settled in Palmer Lake, Colorado.

The Daltons were extremely versatile thieves, and at the time of which I speak were indulging their talents in cattle rustling. The cattle were driven to a hideout, a place called Dulce, about seven miles west of Margo. There the animals were butchered, skinned, and the meat sold to railroad construction gangs and Indian agents. The hides were the items of real value. There was not enough law and order in the country to halt the depredations of the outlaw bands.

Not only were the outlaws crooked. There was a reputable cattleman in the country who owned a sizable herd of beef cattle. The U.S. government bought great numbers of cattle on the hoof, killing them when needed for the Indians. This cattleman sent word that he had several thousand head to sell. A government agent came to count them so the cattleman could be paid. The cattleman stationed the agent at the end of a gulch and told him that the critters would be driven past while the agent counted them.

Meanwhile the cattleman had cut out about a hundred head of red shorthorns, plus one black and white spotted steer. Eight times the herd was driven past the agent while he counted them. On the ninth time around—the animals were being driven around a small hill, out of sight each time, then back down the gulch past the agent—the government man grew suspicious.

"Seems I've counted that same black-and-white-spotted steer every time you've driven another bunch past me," he complained.

The cattleman laughed it off. "Nope," he assured the agent, "I put one of them black-and-white-spotted steers in my herds to each hundred shorthorns. When I want to count my cattle easy-like, I just count the spotted ones, multiply by a hundred, and there you are."

The government man was completely reassured and eventually that same herd of a hundred cattle were bought and paid for by the government fifteen or twenty times.

We were going toward Durango one afternoon when a whiskered, hard-looking gent, armed to the teeth, rode up on the track and began waving us down. Jerry McNerney stopped. Our head brakeman got off, and the conductor, a nervous individual who liked to assert his authority, hurried over from his four-wheeled caboose. "I'm Dalton," the hard-looking gent informed us. A dozen equally hard-looking men rode up then and grouped themselves around us. Dalton faced the conductor. "Have you got a empty boxcar in your train?" he demanded.

"That's none of your business," snapped the conductor, mad as a hornet at having his train stopped.

"I ast ya a civil question," purred Dalton, his eyes hardening, "Now, I want a civil answer."

"I've got an empty," the conductor grudgingly admitted.

"We got a carload of hides just over th' hill. We'll jest hold ya up 'till we get 'em loaded," decided Dalton.

"I've no orders to load a car of hides. You can't delay my train while you load 'em either," shouted the conductor.

The brakeman butted in, siding with his fellow trainman. Dalton listened without comment. When the brakeman finally ran down, Dalton hauled out a .45. He pointed it toward the two trainmen. "Peel off your coats," he instructed.

Loudly protesting, the pair removed their coats. About that time the rear brakeman came over. Dalton told him to take off his coat.

"Now," said Dalton, when the trio had complied with his orders, "we was gonna load them hides ourselves. Since ya got so damned smart, you'll pack 'em over th' hill an' load 'em!" We were delayed four hours while the train crew carried the stinking, green hides and dumped them into a little four-wheeled boxcar.

I hate outlawry, but I must confess that I rather enjoyed watching the scene from the cab of the 57.

Outlaws were not our only enemies. The country through which it operated was the railroad's greatest foe. Cumbres Pass, a natural snowshed, was notorious

for the severity of its winters. It stood like a bandit, exacting its toll of lives, of fuel, of power, of hard work. The narrow gauge challenged old Cumbres in all his moods, and fought a draw battle.

Our snow-fighting equipment consisted of wedge plows bolted on the front ends of engines, and plenty of man power. When winter howled down from the pass a number of our little locomotives were set aside for snow fighting. The wedge plows were ungainly steel butterflies. When blizzards raged over the mountains, four to seven and eight engines were coupled behind a wedge-plow engine. A coach loaded with section men was coupled on the rear and away we went. It was dangerous work, but we gave little thought to that. Life was cheap—and exciting.

The engines were coupled together with pilot tongues. These tongues were iron, weighed ninety pounds, and were hinged on the pilots so they could be lifted and guided into the coupling slot on the next engine. Once in a while the force of the shoving locomotives behind the wedge-plow engine turned them over and another casualty was chalked up against the pass.

About the only places offering unobstructed runs at the deep drifts were the long, wooden trestles. How our devil-may-care young engineers speeded up when they smashed through a deep slide and nosed out on a wooden bridge! Curves were no hazard. I've hung on for my life while the engine I fired rode around a curved trestle on the wheels on the high side!

Ours was a harsh, grim country, particularly along Cumbres Pass and through Toltec Gorge. I wonder

if the monument still shows against the granite at the mouth of the tunnel in Toltec Gorge? The monument was erected in memory of a tragedy that happened the first year the narrow gauge operated over the pass.

Pop Lyman was engineer on a four-car passenger train that day. A gang of section men had been working on the track on the west side of the tunnel. The investigation which was held later brought out the fact that the section foreman had elevated the rail on the wrong side of a sharp curve. When Pop Lyman hit the curve his engine and the baggage car went around it. But the next two coaches turned partly over. The rear coach snapped loose from the Miller hook and dropped more than a thousand feet to the bottom of Toltec Gorge, where it smashed to pieces on the edge of Los Pinos Creek. Thirteen persons were killed. The railroad erected the monument on which was inscribed the names of the victims. The wreckage was never picked up and remnants of it probably may still be seen.

I fired the 57 on a work train during construction of the Silverton branch. This forty-seven-mile stretch of narrow-gauge railroad—still operating—has the most breath-taking scenery to be found along the entire D. & R.G.W. Railroad.

Jerry McNerney was still my engineer. Some months prior the bank in Silverton had been robbed. Shortly before the robbery a time lock had been purchased somewhere in the East and installed on the safe of this bank. It was the first time lock ever seen west of the Mississippi and had cost a small fortune.

The robbers dynamited the safe and carried off the time lock along with their loot. The loot didn't amount to so much as the time lock, and the bank offered a large reward for its return, and no questions asked.

I had heard nothing about the robbery or the time lock. Our work train was following ties and rails in the canyon of the Animas River. Time hung heavy on the hands of the train and engine crews. One afternoon the head brakeman was loafing around the 57. "I wonder if there's any trout in that river?" I asked him, and pointed below where the Animas tumbled crystal clear over the granite floor of the gorge.

"Never heard of any," grunted the brakeman.

"Let's climb down and take a look," I suggested.

He nodded. Together we clambered down the almost precipitous slope and finally halted at the edge of the stream. A close scrutiny of the bottom failed to reveal the sight of a fish of any kind. We were about to return to the 57 when something bright and sparkling caught my eye.

"Wonder what that is?" I said, pointing to the bright object under some three feet of water and a couple of feet from shore.

"Sardine tin," he guessed.

"Don't look like a sardine tin to me," I argued. "I'll lie down. You hold my feet. Maybe I can fish it out."

He grudgingly consented. I stretched face down and plunged my right arm into the icy water. I was in to my shoulder before my fingers curled around the shiny object. It was heavy as lead and I had quite a

struggle lifting it out. It was no sardine tin. Neither was it like anything the brakeman or I had ever seen before. It resembled some kind of a clock, with springs and cogs.

The brakeman shook his head dubiously. "Sure too deep for me, that thing," he decided.

"Let's haul it up to the engine. Maybe Jerry will know what it is," I suggested.

Together we wrestled the thing up the slope and finally dumped it in the gangway. Then I placed it on the wing of the tender. About that time Jerry climbed into the gangway. I pointed to the thing. "What is this, Jerry?" I asked him.

He eyed it curiously. He picked it up and gave it a sudden, violent shake. Several sparkling rubies tumbled out in his hand. They were as large as good-sized peas.

"I ain't got an idea what it might be," grinned Jerry. "But I got my share of whatever it is." He pocketed the gems.

I put the thing back on the wing of the tender and forgot about it. That night when we tied up in Durango, I was just about to climb off the 57 when a burly, officious-looking individual stepped up and fastened strong fingers about my arm.

"Are you the feller who found that time lock today?" he asked, and opened his vest to display a sheriff's badge.

"Reckon I am, if that's what it is," I agreed.

"Where is it?" he demanded.

"On the wing of the tender, where I left it."

"Come along with me," he commanded. "I'll get that time lock, then take you to jail!"

I felt my hair stand straight up. At the same time red-hot anger flooded me. "For what?" I shot at him.

"Seems funny you was able to go right to where the time lock was hid."

I explained how the brakeman and I had fished it out of Animas River. By that time he had the time lock under his arm. When I finished, he deliberated a few moments. "You're workin' steady on the railroad, ain't ya?" he finally asked.

"Yes."

"Well, under them conditions, I guess I can take a chance. I'll leave ya go this time. If anything develops about this time lock, I can always pick ya up."

I was tickled to death to have avoided trouble. The sheriff headed toward town with the time lock. Later I learned the depot agent in Durango had seen it on the wing of the tender and recognized it. He'd called the sheriff. The pair had decided to throw a big bluff into whoever had found it and then collect the reward. I suppose that is what they did because I heard no more about it.

CHAPTER VI

RAYMOND-WHITCOMB EXCURSIONS

WHEN the Silverton branch was completed that year, 1883, I found I had seniority enough to fire a passenger engine. Regretfully I left Jerry McNerney to work with George Porter. George had come from Vermont to Colorado after having run a wood burner on the Vermont Central, and he had a letter to prove it. But he was little better than a kid and the Rio Grande officials who were building from Denver toward Pueblo at the time doubted his letter. They refused to hire him as engineer but offered him a job spotting ties and timbers along the line. George took the job and worked at it about a year and a half. The work was not hard. It consisted of making a single line on the end of the tie or timber if it were first class. Two lines meant second. Three, third, and culls were marked with a black circle.

At the end of his year and a half as spotter, George again asked for a job as engineer. The officials agreed to give him one if he would fire an engine for six months. George fired the required length of time and was assigned an engine of his own. This made him

the oldest engineer in seniority, but the youngest in years, who worked out of Chama.

George told me of a highly dramatic happening which took place while he was still firing an engine on the Vermont Central. When the line was built, the farmers were highly antagonistic toward the railroad company because they felt that they had been cheated when a right of way was condemned through their lands. This feeling did not die down after the road was completed, but smouldered for a long time.

On the night in question, George was firing a passenger train. Their engine had an oil headlight. They approached a long downhill stretch with a heavy grade on the other side. At the bottom of the downhill stretch was a wooden bridge. It was the practice of the engineers to go down the grade toward the bridge as fast as their engines would turn a wheel so they could pull their trains up the other side.

George had filled the firebox with black walnut logs and climbed on his seat where he was squinting ahead. Suddenly, in the feeble illumination cast by their oil headlight, he saw a flash, as if a looking glass had picked up the beam. The flash came again and again. George became uneasy so he crossed to his engineer's side.

"Do you see them flashes down at the bridge?" he asked.

"Yeah, I been noticin' 'em. Probably a tin can, or a piece of glass," said the engineer.

George wasn't satisfied. "If I was you, I'd kinda slow down before we hit that bridge," he said. "Never can tell what might be wrong."

His words caused the engineer to ease off on the

throttle. They halted with the pilot of the engine almost on the bridge. Together the pair unloaded and walked out on the trestle. Nothing was wrong—to all appearances—and they began to feel foolish.

But George still wasn't satisfied. He let himself over the edge and struck a sulphur match. In its flare he saw new sawdust strewn over the ground. The new sawdust had come from the stringers, every one of which had been cut almost through. It had been the saw raising and lowering that he had seen. If their engine and train had struck the bridge as trains usually did, many lives would have been lost and another disastrous early-day wreck would have been chalked up in railroad history.

The railroad company never found out who did the sawing.

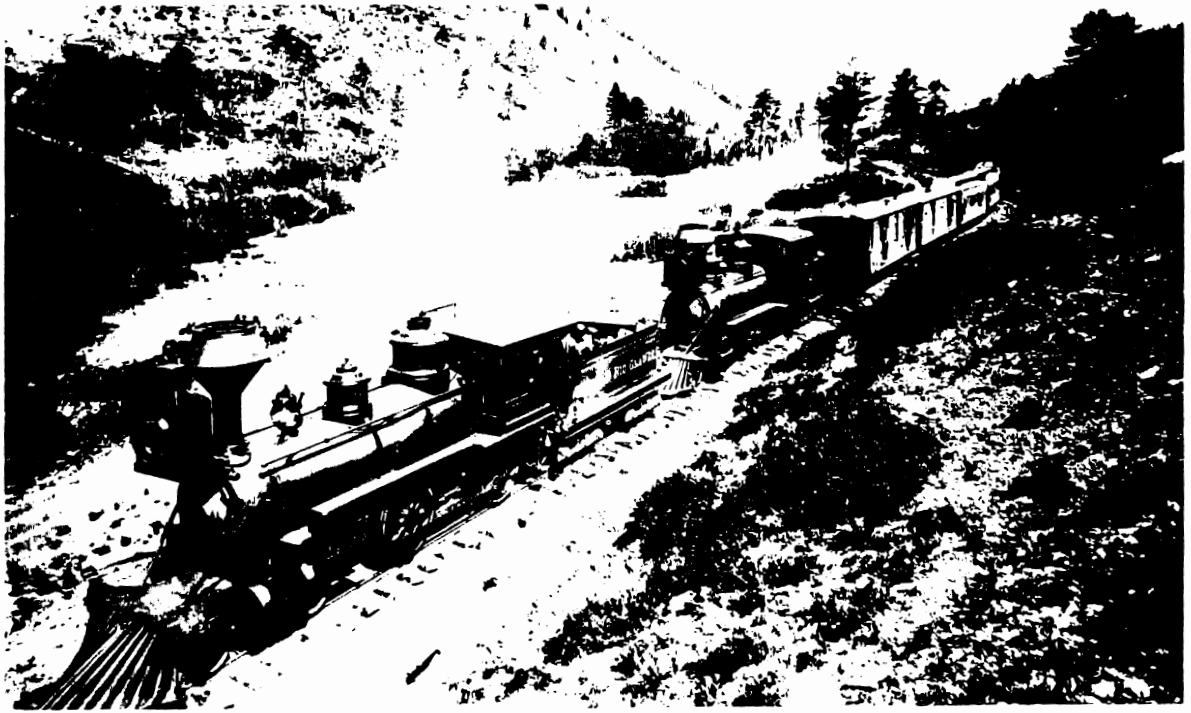
About the same time I started firing for George Porter, the D. & R.G. began handling a large number of Raymond-Whitcomb excursion trains. Originating in the East, they were quite the vogue for the wealthy. Being wealthy, the excursionists were likewise snooty, most of the women carrying lorgnettes, giving the impression that they had come to marvel at the crudities of this newly settled country. Cap Tibbets was our general passenger agent, and as such always personally conducted these tours over the narrow gauge. The trains consisted of tourist sleepers, Pullmans, and dining cars.

I was firing this particular excursion. Cap Tibbets was in charge. At Margo we found about three hundred Utes gathered for "ration day." The government, in addition to giving the Indians beef, also paid

Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

EXCURSION TRAIN IN THE BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON RIVER

On the original Rio Grande main line, about 1890



Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

DENVER & RIO GRANDE PASSENGER TRAIN ON LA VETA PASS, NEAR WALSENBURG, IN SOUTHERN COLORADO ABOUT [illegible]

them each a sum of money, depending on the size of their families. The Indians knew silver and its value. But paper money meant nothing to them. Today the agent was paying off partly in bills. The Indians figured the bills were some kind of ornaments, so, when they were given a few fives and tens, they promptly rolled them up and tied them in their long hair behind their ears. Over half of the bucks were parading around with their black locks decorated with good American bills.

The tourists unloaded and Cap Tibbets, always on his toes for the entertainment of his guests, had a brilliant idea. Those bucks could run like deer, and they loved to race. So Cap told the passengers that if they would make up a pool, he would stage a race for them. They collected several dollars. Cap explained through an interpreter and a group of the swiftest bucks were chosen to run a hundred-yard course, which was marked off.

All of the excursionists gathered at the end of the course. The bucks trotted to the other end. There, to the embarrassment of the entire audience, they proceeded to strip stark-naked. At the signal they were off, straight toward the excursionists. At the end of the course they were still running so swiftly they plunged into the crowd amid screams from the ladies and angry protests from the men. I heard one of the ladies exclaim, "They're built just like white men!"

As I've already told you, my brother Carl had gone switching. Both he and I saved some money and the stark wilderness began to pall on us. We decided to

lay off a few trips and go down to Denver where we could see some bright lights and gaiety.

Larimer Street, in Denver, was the center of the night life. Carl and I headed for there on our first evening in the big city. The first place we stopped was a saloon. It was more than a saloon. It was a hot spot, with a tin-pan piano and many painted ladies. The place was crowded, as were the boardwalks on both sides of the street. We were hardly inside when a glamorous young lady stepped up and engaged us in conversation. I was not interested, but Carl was. "Why don't you come upstairs and buy me a drink?" she cooed.

"Sure," agreed Carl.

Later that evening he told me about it. The lady conducted him down a hallway to a small room in which were a table and two chairs. They sat down. Beer sold for one dollar a bottle, champagne for five.

"Call a waiter and have him bring us a couple of bottles of beer," suggested Carl.

Her lips began to pout. "Champagne, honey," she coaxed.

Carl shook his head. "Beer," he insisted. "I ain't got enough money for champagne."

They argued back and forth. Finally she agreed on beer. She summoned a waiter and whispered something to him. Soon he returned, placed a bottle of champagne on the table, and before Carl could protest, departed.

"Listen," said Carl angrily, "I said beer, and I meant beer."

She pouted and coaxed some more. Sore all through,

Carl finally got to his feet. "You'll get no drink of any kind out of me!" he declared, and turned toward the door.

The lady pressed a button. Almost at once the door opened to admit a husky, hard-looking bouncer.

"What's the trouble, Katy?" he asked, keeping between Carl and the door.

"This cheap skate," she said, pointing to Carl, "offered to buy me a drink. Now he refuses to pay for it."

"I told her I'd buy beer, not champagne!" snapped Carl.

"Come on, cheap skate, kick through with five dollars, or else—" snarled the bouncer.

"Or else, what?" demanded Carl.

For answer the bouncer suddenly reached up and snatched a long-bladed bowie knife from the back of his neck where knives were usually carried. He lunged toward Carl.

Like a flash Carl picked up the thick-glassed bottle of champagne and crashed it down with every ounce of his strength. It landed squarely on the top of the bouncer's skull and shattered into a thousand pieces.

The lady screamed. The bouncer went down like an axed beef. Carl left there and was back in the saloon in about three leaps. With a hue and cry rising behind, he dove into the crowd outside.

Carl finally located me and together we went to our room where we holed up for the rest of that night. Our trip to Denver soon palled on us and we were glad to get back to Chama and our railroad jobs.

Not long after our short vacation a young engineer was killed in a freak accident. He was switching some boxcars. During one of the moves he threw his long reverse lever into forward motion. For some unaccountable reason, the latch failed to catch. When he opened the throttle, the reverse lever smashed back and struck him in the pit of the stomach. He lived but a short time. The company doctor claimed the blow ruptured his intestines.

Holmes, another young engineer, came home unexpectedly to find a personable young lawyer on rather intimate terms with his wife. Holmes was a hotheaded fellow. He became fighting mad. During the fracas, he picked up a chair and brought it down on the lawyer's head.

They finally brought the lawyer back to consciousness, only to find the blow had knocked him crazy. Not long afterward the lawyer died. Holmes was arrested for manslaughter and lodged in the Durango jail.

Holmes was well liked up and down the railroad. Everybody who could visited him while he was held in the county bastille. After a few weeks he was brought up for trial. His wife appeared to testify in his favor. She claimed, from the witness stand, that the lawyer had forced his attentions on her.

The jury found a quick verdict, "Not guilty."

Holmes returned to his job as engineer and worked there for several years.

The railroad company had a ruling that nobody, except qualified employees, was allowed to ride the cabs of any locomotives. One evening a section fore-

man who had come to Chama to replenish the family larder asked an engineer who was just getting ready to leave with a light engine to carry him to his section house several miles down the line. The engineer agreed.

The section foreman climbed into the left side of the cab and made himself comfortable on a board stretched from window sill to boiler top. The little Consolidated rambled along in lively style until she came to a short, wooden trestle. When she was about to the center of it there came a crash, followed by the splintering of wood and a cloud of steam. The engineer and his fireman leaped to safety. But the section foreman was not so lucky. He was crushed to death under the boiler.

The engineer was fired for having allowed the section foreman to ride on his engine without proper authority. For several weeks thereafter it was impossible for anybody to climb into the cab of a locomotive and visit with the engine crew, even while they were standing still. Time salved over the ruling again and before long every engine crew was hauling outsiders in their cabs as usual.

Show me a railroad division without a practical joker and a poet on it and I'll show you a gang of men who've fallen into a rut. Our practical joker was a young fellow named Cunningham who pulled passenger between Chama and Alamosa. Cunningham's jokes were quite harmless. He was an ingenious individual who generally backed up his practical jokes with a nealty built gadget.

One morning he came to work with a "lung tester."

Soldered to the top of a tin can was a piece of pipe, flattened to form a mouthpiece. Directly above where the pipe entered the can was a rubber ball. Nobody but he knew it, but the ball was fastened solidly to the pipe. Near the bottom of the can was a tiny hole. Cunningham had filled the can with lampblack. In order to test one's lungs, one was supposed to blow into the pipe hard enough to raise the rubber ball. Instead of the ball rising—it being fastened solidly—the force of the air going into the can would blow a stream of lampblack so it struck the blower on his chin, neck, and collar.

Nearly every man working out of Chama tried out the "lung tester." Not one of them ever caused the ball to rise, although there was some powerful blowing done. We who tried and failed, and were in on the joke, enjoyed many a hearty laugh when Cunningham found a new victim.

Our poet was a brakeman. Although not nearly so good as Cy Warman, who gained national fame as a poet and song writer while firing out of Salida on the narrow gauge, this fellow was clever. He wrote a verse about every train and engineman on our division. I remember only one of them. It went:

> There's little Billy Shay with his old eighty-four.
> He'll pull five cars, and not a damned car more.
> Bill's a good fellow, for one of his kind,
> And can always tell when they're dragging behind.

On our return from Denver, my brother, Carl, had transferred to a job as brakeman. It was the cash fares that kept brakemen eating when they were

away from home. Hobos were the natural source of these fares, which was usually one dollar a division.

Superintendent Ridgeway, "Tige," as we affectionately dubbed him, was the kind of an official who minded his own business so long as the trainmen and enginemen did their work. But he was transferred to Salida and a new man, this one a stickler for the book of rules, took his place.

There were armies of Mexicans riding the freight trains. They preferred riding coal cars and boxcars to coaches. The freight brakemen and conductors knew this and they charged about double the fare of a passenger train. The Mexicans cheerfully paid. This day, Carl had thirty Mexicans riding a couple of four-wheeled flatcars and he was collecting fares when the new superintendent came along in his private car. He stopped long enough to not only fire Carl but to blackball him elsewhere on the narrow gauge.

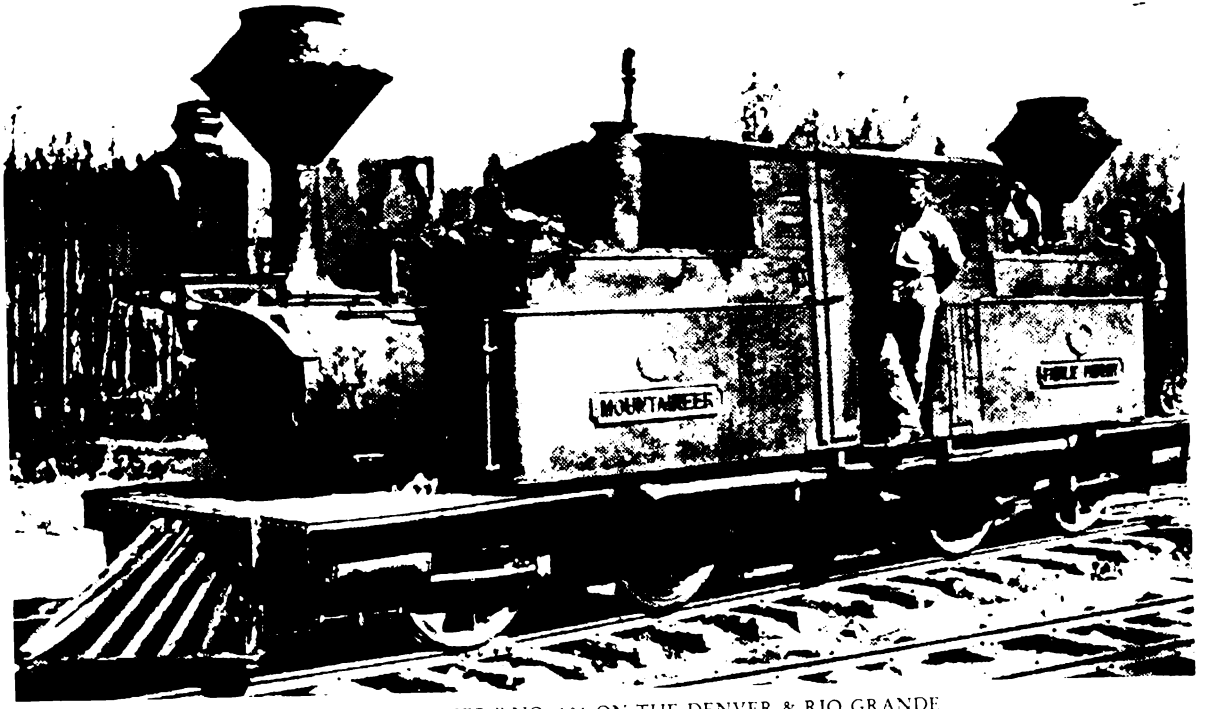
CHAPTER VII

WE PULL STRAWS

UNTIL 1883 we held system seniority rights. But as the D. &. R.G. extended its rails westward to Salt Lake City, Utah, it was decided to split the railroad into divisions. From Denver to Salida was designated the First Division. The branch line from Salida to Leadville was the Second Division; from Salida to Grand Junction, via Marshall Pass, the Third Division; from Alamosa to Durango, the Fourth Division. The line from Grand Junction to Salt Lake City became the Rio Grande Western. The entire thirteen hundred miles of track was thirty-six-inch gauge.

With the cutting into divisions, three engine crews from Chama were given their choice of locating on other divisions. All of us wanted to go to Denver, or to Salt Lake City. One of the three crews would have to go to Gunnison, Colorado.

Gunnison was the last place any of us wanted to go. It was then a Godforsaken town, dying a slow death. It had experienced a boom a few years earlier when it looked as though it would become a steel center. But Pueblo had beaten it out of that and the two smelters in Gunnison had closed down. Moreover,



THE "MOUNTAINEER," NO. 101 ON THE DENVER & RIO GRANDE

Built in England and presented by the Duke of Sutherland for service on the narrow-gauge La Veta Pass Line, 1873 to 1883. The engine was of the Farlie Patent Double-Ender Type (0-4-4-0), a wood burner with 10 x 18-inch cylinders and 39-inch driving wheels. Its weight was 62,000 pounds.

it was about the coldest place in the United States in winter.

In order to settle our arguments over who'd go where, the master mechanic made us a proposition. We'd draw straws. The crew getting the longest straw would go to Denver, the next longest to Salt Lake, and the short one would go to Gunnison. The three crews were Engineer Kline and Fireman McGraw, Jim McCabe and his fireman, and George Porter and I. The time was October, 1883—just a year after steel was laid through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and over Cerro Summit.

I've often thought how those three straws decided the whole future of six men. Kline and McGraw drew the long one. McCabe and his fireman drew the middle one. Porter and I had to go to Gunnison! The two lucky crews crowed at their good fortune while Porter and I felt that fate was against us.

Less than a month after Kline and McGraw went to work out of Denver they ran past a red light one night and were fired. Kline returned to Alamosa where he worked as a machinist for years. McCabe and his fireman went to work out of Salt Lake City. A few years later they struck a washout and were both killed. So the short straw proved the best one after all.

Now that our futures were settled, we three crews were ordered to take our engines and run from Chama to Pueblo, picking up twenty-eight cars of coke at La Veta. Not one of us had ever been over the road. Our head brakeman was instructed to act as pilot, showing us the grades, the sharper curves, and other

hazardous points. But the brakeman had a heavy date and wanted to hurry to Pueblo. Porter and I were on the head engine, the 88, named the Ptarmigan She was a 2-4-0 with forty-five-inch drivers.

From the east side of the La Veta Pass to Pueblo, the country is rolling, up and down hill. The brakeman got his wish about reaching Pueblo in a hurry. During the fifty-odd years I ran narrow-gauge locomotives, that ride stands out in my memory as the fastest, wildest one I ever took. We had straight air brakes on our train. The two engineers behind us never shut off their throttles because they knew no more about the hills and the hollows than did Porter and I. There were times when only the wheels on the high side rode the rails. In a surprisingly short time we pulled into the Pueblo yards.

From there, Kline and McGraw would go to Denver. McCabe and his fireman would go to Salt Lake City, while Porter and I would head over the hill to Gunnison.

We didn't get to Gunnison for several months. The narrow gauge was experiencing an acute shortage of trainmen and enginemen. Freight and passenger business was booming. Men were worked to the limit of their endurance. No sixteen-hour law gave us relief during those roaring days.

Porter and I were "borrowed" by the master mechanic at Pueblo to work out of there. When the D. & R.G. was being built, the Duke of Sutherland, an English stockholder, presented the railroad with what he figured would be the last word in engines built for heavy mountain service. She would be a model of economy because she was actually two loco-

motives in one. A single engine crew could operate her. She had two separate boilers, backed fairly close together, two front ends, cowcatchers, and headlights. She carried her water in jackets built over the boilers and known as "saddle tanks." Her coal was in a box about the size of a large packing crate between the two firebox doors. She was named "The Mountaineer," and the words were painted on both sides of her double cab.

With a single engineer trying to operate two separate throttles, two reverse levers, two sanders, and two whistles, you can well imagine what happened. Coupled to a string of loaded cars, the Mountaineer would operate one part of herself perfectly, while the other part would merrily spin her drivers on the rails and not pull a pound.

She was sitting in the roundhouse in Pueblo the next morning after our arrival there. I looked her over. The name plate on her front end read: "Fairlee Pat. Double Ender Type. 0-4-4-0." She was junked shortly thereafter.

Since I had passed through Pueblo, on my way to Chama, the town had become a roaring hive of industry. Steel mills belched black smoke into the blue sky. Train after train of iron ore, of coke, of coal, and of every imaginable commodity, rolled in from all four points of the compass. A very large number of our little engines was required to handle that kind of business. Our boxcars and coal cars held ten tons apiece, and our heaviest engines weighed only about twenty-six tons. They would handle about twenty-five cars at the most.

Today the progressive Denver & Rio Grande West-

ern Railroad crosses the Continental Divide via two alternate routes—the six-mile Moffat Tunnel or by way of Tennessee Pass. One of the most modern transportation systems in the United States, it is a far cry back to the days when the main line crawled over Marshall Pass, through the now abandoned Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and over Cerro Summit.

The company had just purchased thirty "giant" new narrow-gauge locomotives from the Grant Works. A thirty-six-inch-gauge pike out in Iowa had ordered these engines, but before they were finished the Iowa pike had standard-gauged. Our railroad took them off their hands. These Grants weighed about thirty tons apiece, ready for service. They had a 2-8-0 wheel arrangement and consolidated-type engines, with straight top boilers and deckless cabs. The D. & R.G. was also breaking in ten new passenger engines of the 4-6-0 wheel arrangement. They were beautiful little machines, with wagon-top boilers, forty-eight-inch drive wheels, and straight stacks. We promptly dubbed them "shotguns." Until the arrival of these new shotguns, all of our power had been diamond stacks.

Porter and I were assigned to helper service westward out of Pueblo. We were given one of the new Grants, which were numbered 200-229. They were excellent engines in every respect save riding quality. They jolted us around like popcorn in a frying pan. It was impossible to sit down in the cab while the engine was moving. We were forced to stand up and take the bumps with flexed knees. Even then we were badly jostled. We were usually double-headed out of Pueblo, with our engine on the point. Going through

the Royal Gorge I would look back and envy the fireman on the other engine as he rode on his seat, enjoying the scenery in comfort.

One of the engineers running between Pueblo and Salida was a tall, skinny young fellow named Billy—I've forgotten his last name. It is not so easy to forget him. He was no older than I, and looked younger. Billy did not give a whoop in hell for any risk that would have deterred an ordinary man. Tall, freckled, and boyish, Billy had a frank, engaging face that made one feel he would be glad to do one any favor within his power. His engine was the 217, one of the new Grants. She had only thirty-six-inch drivers. I refer to their size because it was this young engineer's amiable recklessness and these small drivers that produced one of the most remarkable incidents in Western railroading.

The special train of Fanny Davenport, a famous opera singer of that time, was detained somewhere in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison by engine trouble. She was on her way from Salt Lake City, on a tour of the Western States, and her schedule, which was very tight, called for her presence in Pueblo that night. The opera house there had been completely sold out two days in advance. Miss Davenport said she never had been late to a concert. When her train finally limped into Salida, it had less than two hours and fifteen minutes in which to make the ninety-six miles to Pueblo. Even today, that stretch of track, laid with 120-pound rails, demands more than three hours with the Scenic Limited, for the route is crooked

as a corkscrew and includes the world-famous Royal Gorge.

Billy and his 217 were lined up for the run. Fanny's manager went into action, got a clear track for the special train, all speed restrictions removed, and he absolved the railroad company of any responsibility in case of an accident. Then he went over to the young engineer and talked him into making the insane run—ninety-six miles on thirty-six-inch drivers on a locomotive that rode like a lumber wagon over thirty-five-pound rails and around a number of curves with twenty-five-degree radius—in less than 135 minutes.

In order to do this, the manager had taken Miss Davenport along with him and introduced her to Billy. Billy grinned all over. He was holding his long oiler, and was so flustered that he dribbled black oil in the cinders when she spoke to him.

He tilted his derby and scratched at his thick, sandy-colored hair. "I reckon we'll pull into Pueblo in time for you to sing," he promised, "or we won't ever hit Pueblo at all."

"You are wonderful to do that for me," she said with her most charming smile.

If Billy had any doubts about the run, they were gone now. When the 217 chuffed out of Salida, only two hours and five minutes remained. Billy took the bridle off his engine. Her peanut whistle squealed a challenge to the entrance to the gorge, and her side rods danced like the needle on a sewing machine. Billy made a nonstop run. He put his train into Pueblo on time, 125 minutes to travel 96 miles of the crookedest, roughest track west of the Mississippi.

If Miss Davenport said Billy was wonderful before they started, she said much more when they arrived. She procured tickets for the best seats in the house for him and his fireman. Several newspapers wrote about Billy and his fast run. From that day on the 217 was known as the Fanny Davenport.

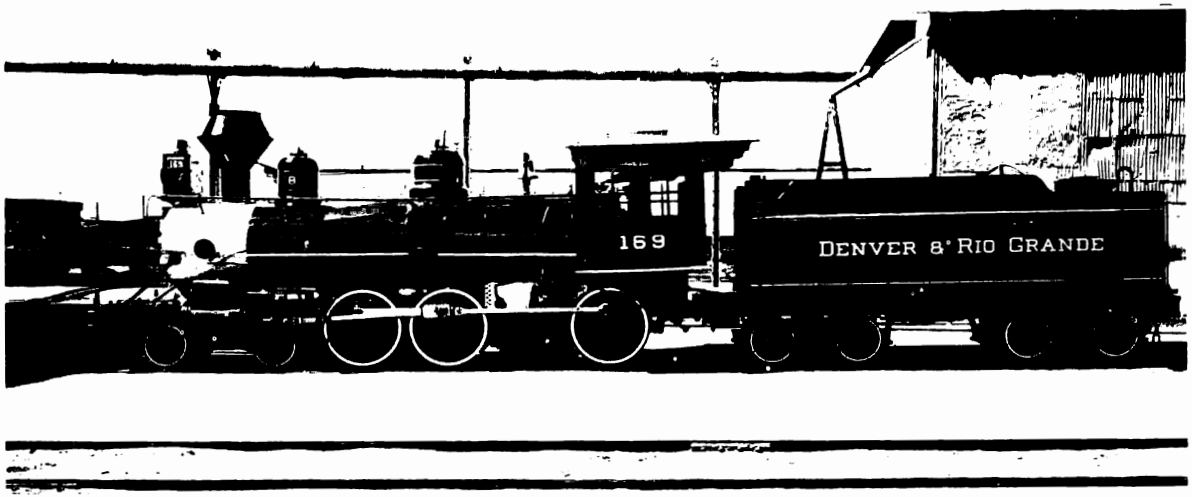
Living in cubbyhole rooms, eating at greasy spoons, Porter and I were moved about like men on a checkerboard, subject to the will of the company. From Pueblo we were transferred to Salida, to work between that young, lusty railroad town and Leadville.

Leadville was a booming gold and silver camp. The famous H. A. W. Tabor was taking his millions out of the Matchless Mine and building himself a monument in Denver, the Tabor Grand Opera House. Every mountainside around Leadville was riddled with prospect holes. The city never slept. Saloons were crowded twenty-four hours of the day, for that timber-line city was wide open. Every kind of gambling joint flourished there. Solid blocks of "dance halls" drew the miners to spend their money of evenings.

The Denver and Rio Grande and the Denver, South Park and Pacific—the South Park narrow gauge—both built into Leadville shortly before Porter and I found ourselves running a switch engine there. Through an agreement between the two railroads, the D. & R.G. got two thirds of the business originating in Leadville, the South Park got the balance. Our railroad's share was sixty loads every evening, the South Park's, thirty. A dozen midget switch engines, some of them with saddle tanks, were kept busy spot-

ting empties and dragging loads to and from a number of producing silver mines.

The D. & R.G. and the D.S.P. & P. used joint track from Buena Vista to Leadville. The route over Boreas and Fremont passes from Como had not been built as yet. Later on in this book I will cover the South Park narrow gauge more fully.



Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

DENVER & RIO GRANDE NARROW-GAUGE ENGINE NO. 169

Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

RIO GRANDE PASSENGER TRAIN ON THE CREST OF MARSHALL PASS IN THE EARLY 1880's

CHAPTER VIII

LINKS AND PINS AND STRAIGHT AIR

AFTER working on a switch engine in Leadville for about thirty days, Porter and I were sent back to Salida to work over Marshall Pass. Marshall Pass was a roaring streak of three-foot railroad track, over the 10,856-foot-high Continental Divide. The grades on both sides were a steady 4 per cent. Our brakes were straight air, and the brakemen used pick handles to tie down hand brakes. They were a brawny lot of don't-give-a-damn young bucks. Too cocky to use the paddles provided by the company to make couplings with links and pins, most of them had from one to four fingers missing off their right or left hands. Any brakeman using a paddle was called a "scissorbill," because of the way he crossed his arms.

The enginemen were just as colorful. Dick Chinn, who ran an engine over Marshall Pass, was a character right out of a book. Dick had been a mule skinner on a wagon train before the railroad crossed the gap to the left of Mount Ouray. To this day, faint marks of the old wagon road may still be seen from the track. One marvels that mules and wagons were able to navigate it. Dick Chinn drove his engine as he had driven his

mules, using the whistle cord for a jerk line, bawling when he wanted to move, "Gee-up!" and geeing and hawing his iron horse around the sharp curves. He was a hard-drinking, profane man, but as good an engineer as he had been a mule skinner. He knew how to hold trains from running away down the steep grades.

Speaking of runaways, put yourself in the place of Conductor Frank Perkins. Blonde-haired, blue-eyed Frank was running a freight train that November night. Winter had come early to the high country and the timber-line slopes were silvery white in the light of a full moon. Frank's train was the first section of 74, a solid string of coal. His crew consisted of Engineer Paddy Ryan, Fireman Albert Boswell, Brakemen Charley Shaw, Louis Reed, and John Dow.

Closely following them was second 74, a train of ore, merchandise, and lumber. Above Grays, a passing track on the east side of Marshall Pass, the train got away and went roaring down the crooked track with the entire crew riding the decks with pick handles. Paddy Ryan tied his whistle cord down in an anguished plea for hand brakes.

They piled up on a sharp curve directly above the section house at Grays. Fireman Albert Boswell was killed outright. Engineer Ryan was seriously injured, as was Brakeman John Dow. Brakeman Charley Shaw was killed, while the other brakeman, Louis Reed, had a badly shattered leg. Frank Perkins was the only member of the crew still able to move around.

Frank knew the things he must do—get the injured men into the caboose, then go for help. The

nearest telegraph office was Shirley, several miles down the mountain. He carried the injured men back and placed them in the caboose, which was still upright and on the rails.

Second 74 was following them. But how close? They might show up any minute, or they might not be along for several hours. After some swift deliberation, Frank decided to take a long gamble. He left the caboose and ran down to the section house. The only occupant was an Italian who could barely speak or understand English. Frank tried to explain to the Italian that he wanted him to take a red lantern and go up the track and flag second 74 so they wouldn't plow through the caboose, while he went down to Shirley and telegraphed for help. The Italian refused at first on the grounds it was too cold. When Frank threatened to bend his lantern over his skull, the man agreed.

Frank next tore the lock from the tool house and dragged a four-wheeled push car out and set it on the rails. The light car bounded down the steep grade with Frank holding a brake pole through a slot in the floor. He was worried, half sick from shock, and uncertain whether the Italian would go back and flag, or return to the section house and go back to bed.

Less than two miles from Grays the push car rammed into a cut filled with snow. It stuck tight. Frank got off, stiff with cold, and wallowed forward on foot. A thousand feet below him glowed the tiny light of the operator's shack. By rail it was almost four miles away. By a short cut, about a mile. Frank plunged into the timber, through waist-deep snow. Sliding, falling, rolling, completely exhausted, he

finally reached the tiny station of Shirley. In the warm telegraph office he made his report, ordered a wrecker and doctors.

By a railroad miracle the injured men in the caboose were not smashed by second 74. The Italian had gone up the track about a quarter of a mile behind the caboose and stopped with his red lantern. There he stood, red lantern hanging at his side when second 74 came around the curve. The engineer saw the red lantern, saw the immobile Italian, and halted his train.

Paddy Ryan died on the way to the hospital, so that runaway chalked up three victims.

Is there a major railroad in the land that has never had a train robbery? There was one on the narrow gauge and it was successful. Although it happened some years after Porter and I came to the Third Division, this seems the place to tell about it because it took place on Marshall Pass. Westbound passenger train Number 315, with an engineer by the name of Ruhland, was drifting down Marshall Pass. About seven miles from Sargents, the helper town at the foot of the hill, is an elbow curve known as Mill Creek Switch. Heavy spruce and lodgepole pine forest comes down almost to the track here, and the spot is rather gloomy.

As they approached the curve, Ruhland saw a pile of ties across the rails. He slowed and halted a few feet from the obstruction. Suddenly a gang of masked men poured from the dense timber, flourishing six guns. Two of them climbed into the engine cab. A second pair entered the express car,while the others

continued back to rob the passengers. Since that day it has been pretty generally conceded that the job was pulled by a local gang because of the inhuman manner in which Ruhland was treated. At some time or other Ruhland seems to have antagonized a member of the band, because one of the men entering the cab crashed his gun butt down on the engineer's head, knocking him unconscious. Ruhland died later from the effects of that blow.

In the coaches the passengers were lined up and forced to drop all valuables into heavy canvas sacks. Among the passengers was a Jewish commercial man who had concealed his gold watch under his skullcap. The heavy gold chain hung down over his forehead. When one of the bandits asked if he had any valuables, this commercial gentleman shook his head so violently the chain swung like a pendulum before his eyes. The bandits were very much amused, and they ended up by allowing him to keep his watch. The pair in the express car dynamited the safe and stuffed the contents in sacks. Horses were hidden in the timber and when the robbery was over the gang mounted and galloped back into the wild, uninhabited country.

Hastily formed posses scoured the mountains for days, but no trace of the bandits ever was found. The express company made public no figures of their loss. It was estimated at around sixty thousand dollars in cash.

As I mentioned earlier, Superintendent Ridgeway, "Tige," as we affectionately called him, had been transferred from the Fourth Division to the Third Division, with headquarters at Salida. Ridgeway was

a great official. He wore a stubby chin whisker which was as white as snow. When that chin whisker hung down, Ridgeway was in a good humor. When it stuck straight out, every engineman and trainman hunted holes in which to hide until the storm blew over. Quick to bury the hatchet, Ridgeway was equally stubborn when he made up his mind the other way.

A strapping brakeman had hired to work out of Salida. Ridgeway fired him for some infraction of the rules. It was customary for the genial superintendent to call a fired man back to work as usual after a day or two. Experienced railroaders were scarce and Ridgeway was a human being. This brakeman stuck around, but Ridgeway did not call him back for some reason. At last he went to Ridgeway and asked him for a service letter. Ridgeway gave him one, an excellent letter to all appearances. But most of the railroads wrote service letters on two different kinds of watermarked paper. One of these watermarks showed a crane with a straight neck, which confidentially gave the man carrying it a clear record. The other watermark depicted a crane with a broken neck. This was the same as being blackballed on every railroad in the land.

Not knowing he had a crane with a broken neck on his letter, the brakeman went out hunting a job. Depending on him were a wife and two children. He found job after job, only to be dismissed after a few days or a few weeks. In this manner he drifted around for several months. By accident he discovered the watermark on his letter, the broken-necked crane. He wrote Ridgeway asking for a "clear" letter. Ridge-

way ignored the request. Several times he wrote Ridgeway to reconsider and clear him so he could get a job at the only work he knew. Each time his letter was ignored.

In desperation the brakeman headed for Salida. When he burst into Ridgeway's office the chief clerk tried to halt him. The brakeman shoved the clerk out of his way and stormed into the inner office. When Ridgeway jumped to his feet at the intrusion, the brakeman demanded a clear service letter. Stubborn as a mule, Ridgeway refused. The brakeman jumped over the desk and gave the superintendent a terrible whipping. He blackened both eyes, cut his lips and continued the assault until Ridgeway yelled "enough!" Ridgeway sat down and wrote out a clear service letter then and there. The following day Ridgeway hunted up the brakeman and offered him a job on his division again, just to show he held no hard feelings.

For years Ridgeway laughingly told how the brakeman had whipped him into giving him a letter which showed a staight-necked crane on the watermark.

Because the officials in the general offices appreciated his worth, they furnished Ridgeway with a private train, including a little eight-wheeled locomotive. She was decorated as though for a festive occasion. Her steam and sand domes were polished brass. She was striped with bright red and yellow enamel. Her tires were painted white, as were her side rods.

There were two coaches, Ridgeway's business car and a combined baggage and bunk car for the crew, who were fed by Ridgeway's cook when on the road.

The crew consisted of angineer, fireman, and a brakeman. The superintendent himself acted as conductor.

Ridgeway was crazy about running engines. His regular engineer, an Alabama Tarheel, spent most of his time on duty propped in the easiest chair in the business car, drinking Ridgeway's best bottled in bond whisky, while the superintendent played at running the engine. Little doubt the engine service lost a crackerjack runner when Ridgeway was elevated to officialdom. He was a little wild and loved to make the side rods dance. On the other hand he was everlastingly raising the devil with his engineers because of too fast running.

CHAPTER IX

WE REACH GUNNISON

ON January 10, 1883, after three months of being shuffled over the narrow gauge, Porter and I finally landed at Gunnison, our original destination. The country was in the grasp of a real old-time winter. The temperature fluctuated between thirty and fifty degrees below zero. Snow averaged from four to ten feet deep. To combat the snow the company had the same kind of wedge plows we had used on Cumbres Pass.

The January thaw hit shortly after Porter and I arrived. The Black Canyon of the Gunnison became a railroaders' hell. The almost perpendicular mountains, particularly the north slopes, began avalanching great snow slides down over the track and into the river along the stretches where the railroad followed the north wall. Imagine if you can these tiny narrow-gauge trains, a snorting little eight-wheeled locomotive on the head end, dragging four or five cracker-box coaches through that two-thousand-foot-deep chasm, taking chances on being smashed into matchwood by a thundering snow slide.

Charley Bratt was a fine-looking young engineer

who had come to Gunnison to pull passenger trains between there and Grand Junction. Like Porter and I, he had been transferred from Chama several months earlier. Bratt was a very popular man. One morning Porter and I were called to take a work train through the canyon ahead of the westbound passenger train because of snow slides. We had gone less than three miles into the gorge when we found an unusually long and deep slide. We halted to let the gang of section men from the work train shovel it out.

Meanwhile, Bratt and his passenger train pulled down behind us and stopped about a quarter of a mile away. The passenger brakeman walked ahead to our engine. "Lew," he shouted up at me, "Bratt wants you to come back to his engine and visit with him."

Having nothing else to do, I crawled from the cab and went back to where Bratt was perched in the window of his engine, his feet resting on the boiler top. His locomotive was numbered 108. She was a sister of the 107, the hoodoo engine of the D. & R.G. In 1881, three engines designed to burn anthracite coal had been purchased for passenger service. Numbered 107, 108, and 109, these little machines had such short boilers that the bells were mounted on top of the sand domes. They were built high off the rails and rocked so badly that chains were hung between the tender and engine to keep the fireman from falling off. They were of the 4-6-0 wheel arrangement.

Martinez, Bratt's fireman, was sitting on the left side of the deckless cab. I climbed into the gangway

between tender and cab and we began visiting, talking of the days when we worked out of Chama.

Suddenly Fireman Martinez looked out his window and up the steep mountainside. "My God, fellows, look out!" he screamed.

His warning came too late. There was a thunder of sound like a hundred speeding express trains, an earthquake tremor, then a crash which drowned out everything. Blackness enveloped me and I began struggling to extricate myself. I was wedged between cab and tender, with tons of soggy snow pressing around my body. My right knee felt as though a knife blade was being slowly turned under the cap. I finally fought myself free and looked about with horrified eyes.

The 108 was upside down. Martinez was just getting to his feet on the edge of the frozen river where the slide had carried him. There was no sign of Bratt. Although I had been in dozens of minor derailments and accidents, this was my first experience with a serious one. Instinctively I knew my friend was beyond all human aid. I started running up the track toward our work train, my knee stabbing me with pain. I met a brakeman and shouted that Bratt was buried under his engine in a snow slide. Then I went out like a light.

After thirty minutes of frenzied digging, they found Engineer Bratt, suffocated beneath tons of snow. Both Martinez and I went to the hospital in Salida, where we remained over a month while our injuries slowly healed.

I returned just in time to see more evidence of winter at its worst. At a short siding in the Black Canyon named Crystal Creek, a mile and a half east of the helper town of Cimarron, the company had bridged the Gunnison River with a massive, wooden trestle. All trains had orders to reduce speed to eight miles per hour while crossing it. It was seventy feet above the water and almost eight hundred feet in length. This was only a temporary structure. New steel for a permanent bridge was then being rolled in Pueblo.

The sidetrack of Crystal Creek was almost one hundred feet above the edge of the river. A snow slide rocketed down the north slope across from the railroad, completely filling the canyon and spilling over the rails. In less than twenty-four hours a lake had formed behind the slide which lapped at the ends of the ties of the siding. Our officials got busy. They realized that if the snow damn suddenly broke, everything below would be carried away on the flood. Almost a hundred men were rushed to the scene to try to dig a hole through which the water could gradually escape. But their efforts were fruitless. Just when everybody was desperate, the river began cutting a channel for itself. During the next several days it slowly worked down through the snow damn until it was back to its old level. Not a penny's worth of damage was done.

Everybody heaved great sighs of relief. But they reckoned without the Black Canyon and his thousand moods. A few days after the river went back to its old level, a fifty-ton chunk of granite came thundering down the mountainside and hit the wooden trestle

squarely in the center. All there was left was a rail or two dangling into the abyss. Matchwood filled the canyon until the high water of the next spring swept it away.

The railroad company hung a suspension bridge across and transferred mail, express, and passengers for the next sixty days. They did not replace the bridge at that particular spot, but moved it up the canyon a few hundred yards to where there was little likelihood of another rock tumbling down.

The new bridge was a steel trestle. The day it was completed every available locomotive from Cimarron was ordered down to the bridge. Ten little engines were coupled together and a crew put on the rear one. They were shoved down the mile and a half to the new bridge and gently eased out on the structure to test its strength. The entire populace of Cimarron turned out to watch the excitement. The bridge held all ten engines, about 250 tons, so it was declared safe for traffic and our main line through to Grand Junction resumed operations.

That spring, the 109, a sister to Bratt's 108, knocked out a cylinder head in Cimarron, at the foot of Cerro Summit. Her engineer was instructed to disconnect her on one side and run her to Montrose for repairs. He finally started up the 4 per cent grade, his little engine barking sluggishly, having about all she could do to pull her tender. About two miles from Cerro Summit she struck a little skift of snow, slipped a time or two, and stalled. Try as he would, the engineer was unable to get her started again. At last he walked to Cerro Summit and wired for another locomotive to boost him over the hump.

A few days later her engineer met Mr. Maxwell, who was both trainmaster and chief dispatcher. Maxwell was quite a wag. He tore into the engineer about causing an engine failure with the 109 and ended with, "So it showed mighty poor judgement on your part, having to call out another engine to shove you to Cerro Summit."

"There wasn't anything else to do," argued the engineer.

"Yes, there was," said Maxwell, his face sober. "You should have cut off your tender and doubled in!"

The carded running time from Cerro Summit to Cimarron, five and a half miles, was twenty minutes. None of the engineers regarded it, however. They dropped down the 4 per cent in twelve to fifteen minutes. When he heard about this practice, Superintendent Ridgeway decided to put a stop to it. He waited with his private train at Cerro Summit one day until an eastbound freight with two helper engines chuffed to a stop there. When the two helpers were cut loose from the train to run light to Cimarron, Ridgeway climbed down from his eight-wheeler where he was playing at being the engineer and strode officiously over to them. "Tarheel," his engineer, was lolling back in the business car as usual. Motioning both helper engineers to him, the superintendent announced:

"This speeding down the hill has got to stop. I understand that all of you helper engineers have been exceeding the running time. Today I'm going to go down ahead of you. I want you both to follow me.

I'll clock you down and show you how to use full running time. And from this day on, the first man caught exceeding the speed limit will be fired."

With that he turned and strode back to his engine. There was no wait of five minutes before following a train. Ridgeway whistled off and, followed by the two helpers, nosed out of the adobe cut and started what both engineers figured would be a funeral procession down the mountain.

It was anything but that. Ridgeway simply evaporated, like a bucket dropping down a well. Because both helper engineers wanted to learn how to consume full running time to Cimarron, they kept him in sight, although their three-foot drivers spun a very lively tune.

At Cimarron, Ridgeway got off his engine and looked back. Two helper engineers with their heads poked out cab windows were grinning at him. Both had their watches out with faces upwards in their hands. Ridgeway had dropped the five and half miles in exactly ten minutes! So had they. Which ended that particular lesson in time-card running.

That spring Porter and I were assigned to freight service between Gunnison and Grand Junction, 135 miles. The average train consisted of thirty-five little ten-ton boxcars and coal cars with link and pin couplings and straight air brakes. The cabooses were mere shoe boxes with four wheels, two under each end, as were all our freight cars.

An efficiency expert decided the cabooses should be equipped with "Dutch Clocks," which were speed-

recording devices. They also recorded the time, and thus showed how much was spent at each station.

The speed limit between Gunnison and Grand Junction was fifteen miles per hour. Any engineer exceeding that was fired. Fifteen miles per hour gave crews no chance to pick up a little time lost in switching the numerous stations along the line. The result was the Dutch Clocks became thoroughly despised. They worked from an axle and were completely enclosed, and a long ribbon of paper carried a complete record of each trip. Only the chief dispatcher had a key to unlock these clocks.

One of our brakemen was a short, red-haired little bundle of dynamite from Alabama named Hennicke. Like everyone else, Hennicke hated the Dutch Clocks. Less than a week after they were installed Hennicke came over to the engine before we left Gunnison. He was quite serious.

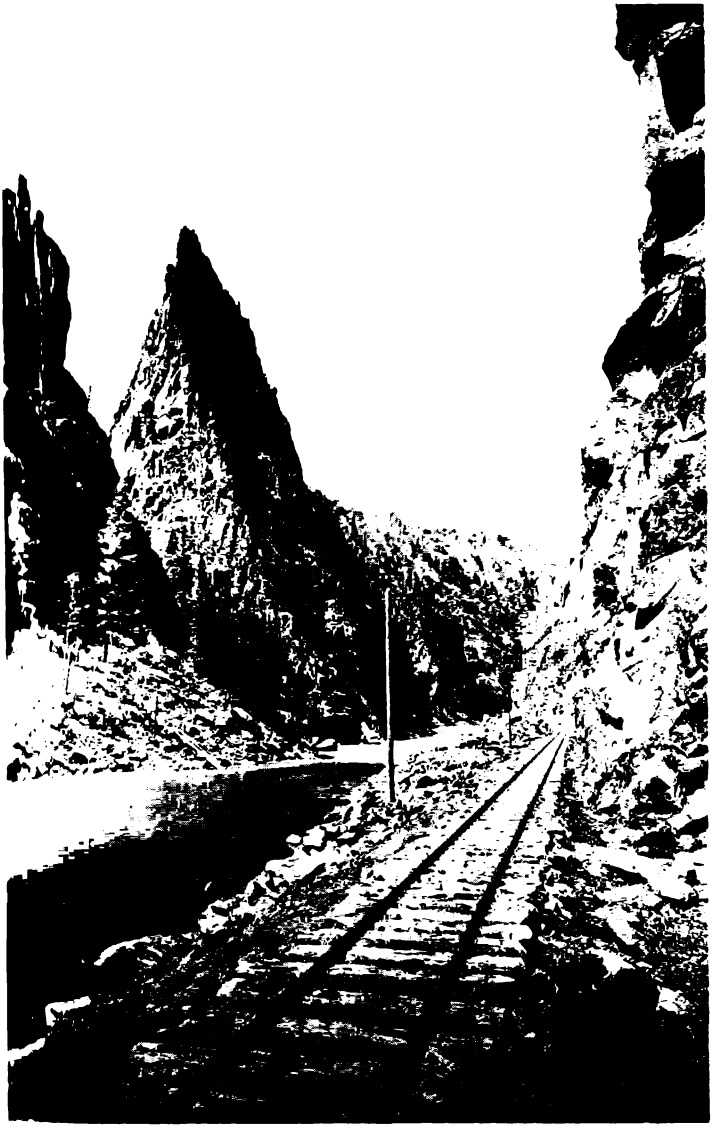
"That damned Dutch Clock ain't workin' this mawnin', George," he told Porter.

"How do you know?" demanded Porter.

"I jest know, is all. You-all can ignore it today."

Knowing Hennicke was honest, Porter took him at his word. We ignored all speed restrictions and made running time, although we did more than the usual amount of switching along the line. In Grand Junction Hennicke reported the Dutch Clock not working, and a new one was installed. Next morning he again told Porter the Dutch Clock was not working, and again we made a successful trip and went into Gunnison right on time. Again Hennicke reported the Dutch Clock not working.

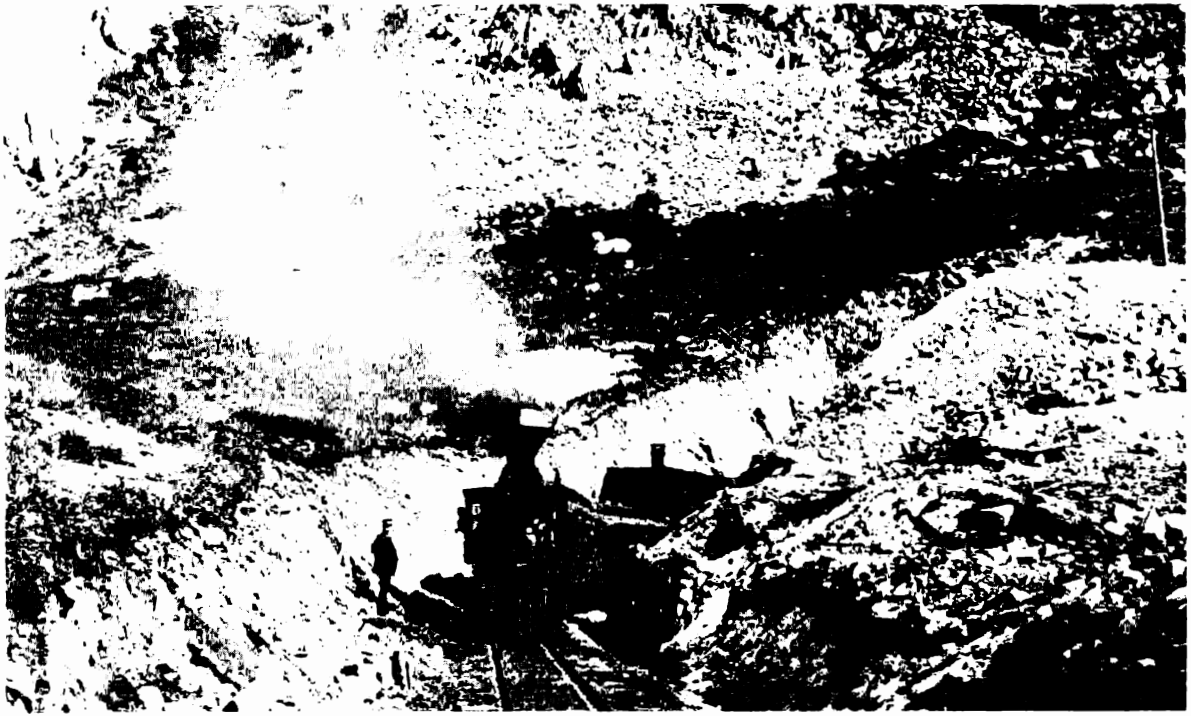
This went on for a couple of weeks, with Porter



Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

THE ORIGINAL DENVER & RIO GRANDE MAIN LINE IN THE BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON RIVER IN THE 1880's

The Curecanti Needle, a regional landmark, is across the river in the background.



Courtesy Colin Moore Collection

[illegible] SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC TRAIN LEAVING ALPINE TUNNEL

ignoring all speed limits and Hennicke keeping the Dutch Clocks from working.

Then Hennicke was fired. The company officials had found out what he was doing to keep the Dutch Clocks from registering. He should have been given meritorious recognition for his ingenuity. Hennicke had procured a key of the right size and had it magnetized. With the key in the lock, a Dutch Clock did not register. The Dutch Clocks lasted less than two years. Not a man of us was sorry to see the last one thrown on the junk pile.

By 1884 I had succeeded in raising a mustache that was the envy of every man on the road. Although my hair was brown, the mustache was a brilliant shade of red. I trained it to curl up on the ends and used all kinds of creams and oils to keep it glossy. I was just turned twenty-one years of age.

A brand-new hotel opened in Gunnison that year, and every narrow-gauge bachelor—most of us were single—moved into it. The hotel was named the "La Veta," and it stood across from the Mullin House. Most of the Denver, South Park and Pacific trainmen and enginemen roomed at the Mullin House.

Although the two railroads were rivals, I had a great number of warm friends who worked on the competing line. In the next chapter I shall tell you something about the D.S.P. & P. Railway, and of the men who kept trains operating over Alpine Pass.

CHAPTER X

THE ALPINE TUNNEL ROUTE

IN 1872 the Honorable John Evans organized a company to build a narrow-gauge railway from Denver, Colorado, into the South Park country, an excellent stock-raising, dairying, and agricultural section. The projected distance was about a hundred miles. Actual work on the line did not commence until 1874, when sixteen miles of track were built. The new railway was named the Denver, South Park and Pacific.

By 1879, the D.S.P. & P. had built across South Park, over Trout Creek Pass, and into the Arkansas Valley. They had decided to build a line over Alpine Pass, down Quartz Creek and the Tomiche Valley, to tap the rich Gunnison country. When completed, Alpine Pass, 11,596 feet above sea level, would be the highest railroad pass in North America. It would be necessary to drill an eighteen-hundred-foot tunnel under the spine of the continent at the summit.

The survey had been run along the north side of the mountain. This survey was either a mistake on the part of the surveyors or else the surveyors sold out

to the D. & R.G., which was trying to beat them into the Gunnison country.

The work of boring the tunnel was begun in January, 1880, a sensible time of the year to start any project above timber line! Midwinter snows were piled high. In May, 1879, contracts had been let for grading a roadbed from the Arkansas Valley to Gunnison and the report was published that trains would be puffing down the Tomiche Valley by November of 1880. In August the rails had all been purchased and grade stakes set along almost the entire length of the route. The prophecy then was that the iron horses would snort down the Tomiche Valley before the end of 1880, but would not be into Gunnison before May, 1881.

In the meantime, the D. & R.G. had decided to go over into the Gunnison country, having found a feasible route via Marshall Pass. Work was promptly begun.

During the following winter both railways struggled with labor problems. At Alpine Tunnel the altitude was so great that it was impossible for a man to do as much work as he could do on the plains. The weather was bitterly cold. The snow piled so high that clearing it away so that the workers could get from their bunkhouses to the tunnel cost seventy-five dollars a day. The western approach was entirely blocked. The workers had to cut shafts to get down to their jobs. For days at a time it was impossible for them to do anything outside. The drillers were made to shove back the granite rubble twenty feet beyond the portal. This was done to keep them from leaving, even though it was necessary to handle the material three

times instead of once, and the expense was tripled. None but experienced old-timers could stand the battle against the elements. During some of the blizzards the men had to form chain gangs to get to their bunkhouses, so they would not get lost. Often, when they reached shelter, their clothes were frozen.

Because of these conditions it was almost impossible to get labor during the winter of 1880-81. The pay rolls show that very few men worked more than a month. Out of more than ten thousand workers who came to the tunnel, only a comparatively few stayed over two days. The Union Pacific, which railroad was backing the D.S.P. & P., gave transportation to thousands of laborers from the East. From two hundred to two hundred and fifty men of all colors and nationalities, from all parts of the world, were employed daily, and on several occasions almost the entire gang left. Nevertheless, the high wages induced a few to brave the wind and cold and remain through the winter. Consequently, the work was never interrupted.

In June, 1881, the D.S.P. & P. succeeded in piercing the backbone of the continent with their tunnel. It was sixteen and a half feet high, sixteen feet wide, arched and timbered with California redwood, 460,000 feet of which had been shipped from the west coast at a cost of $80 to $100 per thousand. By the time the snowsheds were built at both approaches to the bore, 1,500,000 feet of lumber had been used. This had all been hauled through snow from five to fifteen feet deep. The slide-rock inside the tunnel was almost an insurmountable difficulty. Less than two hundred feet of solid granite was encountered.

Courtesy Colin Moore Collection

DENVER, SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC ENGINE NO. 69
Identity of crew not known

Three sizable streams of water were found and these were overcome with tremendous work.

The approaches on both sides of the divide made it necessary to drive the tunnel on a curve, but so accurate was the surveying that the headings came together within 11/100ths of a foot; the distance within 100ths of a foot, and the level was within 94/100ths of a foot.

The tunnel was not finished for traffic until December, 1881.

Meantime, the D. & R.G. had laid thirty-five-pound rails into Gunnison in August, 1881, giving them the best of it. A year later, August, 1882, the D.S.P. & P. finally laid steel into that pioneer city.

Soon little "South Park" engines began whamming their way up Alpine Pass. They had balloon stacks and looked like hay burners. What they actually used for fuel was an extremely soft coal, mined in Baldwin, Colorado. It burned so fast that a train crew always made it a point to switch a car of company coal directly behind the head engine, so they would be sure of getting over the road.

The usual freight train consisted of fourteen loads. It required the efforts of four little engines to boost them to Alpine Pass, up the 3½ per cent grade. If it was after dark, the streams of red-hot cinders which sprayed from the balloon stacks were like a Fourth-of July display. Haystacks beside the track caught fire and the South Park was eternally paying for such property damage.

The South Park had one decided advantage over the Rio Grande. By the Alpine Tunnel route it was

only 211 miles from Gunnison to Denver. By the Rio Grande it was 289.

The South Park used Mason Bogie engines on their passenger trains. Engine and tender were mounted on the same frame. One of them would handle four cracker-box coaches. We railroaders called them "sewing machines," for they were among the fastest, smoothest, quickest little machines ever built. They were the first locomotives west of the Mississippi to use the Walschaert valve gear, which Mason introduced in America. The mechanism was a tangle of levers across the boiler top.

One day a boomer engineer who had hired out on the South Park was assigned a Mason Bogie. Out on the main line something went wrong with the reverse mechanism and the boomer had to disconnect his engine and run her into town on one cylinder. He began taking off pieces of the valve gear and finally decided he had her fixed. He climbed into the cab, shoved his reverse lever forward and opened the throttle. She jumped ahead half a stroke, then reversed herself and backed up half a stroke. For almost a full minute she jumped to and fro. Finally he got her halted. He removed more of the mechanism. Again he opened the throttle. Again she jumped forward, then back. By this time he was mad as a hornet. He snatched up the coal pick and yelled across to his fireman:

"I'll get on the ground. You open the throttle. The first damned thing that moves, I'll knock off with this coal pick!"

The boomer knocked off everything that showed

any motion and finally succeeded in disconnecting the Mason so she could finish her trip on one side.

One day, while Porter and I were still working between Salida and Leadville, we had a meet with a South Park train at Buena Vista, where their line branched from the D. & R.G. to climb over Trout Creek Pass and then meander through South Park. To reach their main line they used one leg of a wye. We arrived before they did, so I dropped off and lined up the switch for them. After a while I saw them coming down the line, and they were running like the Old Nick was riding their heels. When they came in sight of me, I waved them a highball and got a peanut-whistled answer. I figured they would slow for the stub switch, frogs, guard rails, and the sharp curve which led up the leg of the wye. But they apparently wanted to get a good run for Trout Creek Pass and its 4 per cent grade. A Mason was pulling four passenger cars. They went over the switch and around the curve making all of forty miles an hour! The valve mechanism danced a crazy, wild motion as they whizzed past, leaving me dumbfounded.

In addition to Mason Bogies the South Park used Brooks Moguls and Baldwin Consolidateds. I think they gave their locomotives better mechanical care than did our railroad. I know they were much faster and easier to handle. We used straight air brakes on our freight equipment. The South Park used vacuum brakes. Underneath the cars were drums about the size of dishpans, serving as brake cylinders. A long way from perfect, they were still superior to straight air.

Old-timers still talk about the time the Barnum & Bailey circus train stalled on Boreas Pass, between Como and Breckenridge. Regular circus trains couldn't be operated over narrow-gauge track, but, disguised beneath bunting and banners, three South Park boxcars and a coach took on a mildly impressive carnival air. All went well until the chuffing little Brooks Mogul lost her footing on a wet rail and slipped to a halt.

The South Park men had never heard of another Alpine grade buster by the name of Hannibal. However, they hit upon about the same method of getting over the mountain. In one of the boxcars were a couple of elephants with some three tons of weight apiece upon their "driving wheels." Brought around to the rear of the train, they boosted it steadily up to the summit.

Not all of the stories of the South Park end in so light a vein. The grim reaper seemed to have a fondness for Alpine Tunnel and its vicinity. Six miles west of the bore was a big hairpin curve called "Woodstock Loop." About the center of it, a tiny town mushroomed into being when the railroad was built. There was a section house, a water tank, a depot, and a couple of other buildings. The settlers were either stupid or mighty trustful of nature, because they built their town of Woodstock right at the bottom of a snow-slide run.

On March 30, 1884, a dozen persons who called this desolate spot their home, lighted their oil lamps. The operator half dozed to the click of his telegraph instruments, and the stove in his tiny depot glowed

cherry red. Over in the section house, several members of the Doyle family laughed and chatted in a carefree manner. Suddenly there came an ominous roar which grew in volume, only to end in a tremendous crash, punctuated by screams of agony. Then the stark silence of the timber-line fastness again closed in.

Several prospectors lived in cabins below the town of Woodstock. They had "holed" up for the winter. They heard the terrible roar of demolishment and immediately threw on their heavy sheepskins, donned beaver caps, and started toward the scene of the slide.

While one of them went to Pitkin for help, the rest snowshoed toward Woodstock. Of the fourteen persons living there, only Mrs. Doyle survived. She was imprisoned in an air pocket under a tangle of wreckage and snow, barely alive when they dug her out.

Any railroad as colorful as the South Park couldn't help but have colorful characters operating its engines. Of all of them, perhaps burly, red-whiskered Mike O'Hara was the most colorful. Mike was a paradoxical man. A Carrie Nation teetotaler the greater part of the time, he occasionally fell off the wagon. When he did it resounded all the length of the South Park and became a topic of sand-house gossip for days. Mike's stomping grounds were between Gunnison and Como. Much of that time he ran a helper engine out of Pitkin.

When dressed for duty, Mike wore a black derby hat, a swallow-tailed coat, and gray striped trousers. A log chain of gold was attached to his watch and

hung across his black vest. If he smelled the odor of alcohol on the breath of a member of his crew his lectures on temperance were epics of oratory.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox had gained fame as a writer whose prose and poems appeared daily in a large number of newspapers. Her philosophy was followed by many converts. One of the most faithful was Mike. When he read in one of her pieces that years of healthy life could be added to one's expectancy by taking an ice-cold bath every morning the first thing upon arising from bed, he decided to follow her advice.

The only flea in the ointment was the fact that there was not a bathtub in Pitkin. The only running water was in Quartz Creek, which babbled along the south edge of town.

The time was mid-October and the nights were freezing. The morning after reading Ella's advice found Mike up with the dawn and headed toward Quartz Creek. Frost crackled underfoot as he strode across the meadow toward a clump of willows. Hidden by this alpine growth he stripped off his clothes, picked a foot-deep pool large enough to accommodate his nude body, and tested the water with his big toe. He shuddered. Then he took a deep breath, lay down and rolled over a couple of times.

By the time Mike got dressed he was so cold he was shivering all over. A man could catch pneumonia getting this wet and cold, he decided, and headed for the nearest saloon. Inside, he downed several quick ones before he stopped shivering.

The slot machine caught his eye. About the size of an upright piano, these would swallow nickels,

dimes, quarters, half dollars, or dollars through slots of various sizes. Mike started playing nickels. After an hour or so his arm grew tired of cranking it. So he hustled outside and hired a man by the hour to do the job for him.

By noon the next day Mike had fed around a hundred and fifty dollars to the machine. He did not catch pneumonia. But he ended up with a beautiful hangover.

During thirty days every year Mike's engine was an orphan. He took a layoff which he spent in a private room in St. Luke's Hospital in Denver. It is a matter of record that no doctor there ever found Mike in anything but the most robust of health. He apparently derived much moral satisfaction from these sojourns.

The burly engineer was not without a sense of humor. One November morning his engine, coupled ahead of two others, blasted her stack off with fourteen soggy carloads of coal up the west side of Alpine Pass. At Woodstock tank they halted to fill the tenders. Getting water from those South Park, flat-top tanks in freezing weather was a job for the fireman. First he must uncoil a steam hose from around the dome and insert the end in the pipe to thaw the valve loose. While steam did this job, he must get a bar from a cubbyhole under the tank, climb a ladder to the roof, remove a plank lid, then break the ice away from the rod which lifted the valve. This accomplished, the hose was withdrawn, recoiled about the dome, and the spout pulled down into the manhole on the tender.

Mike's fireman filled the tender by riding the

spout, his weight holding it in the manhole against the pressure of water behind. In lifting the spout from the manhole the fireman lost his balance and tumbled in. He emerged soaked to the skin and mad all over.

Mike always instructed a new fireman: "When takin' water, fill 'er up. Let 'er settle. Then fill 'er up again."

The fireman made his soggy way over the coal pile and into the cab. The boiler of the engine extended all the way through the cab separating engineer from fireman.

Mike grunted into his side and glowered across the boiler. "Did yez fill 'er up?" he demanded.

"Yes, I filled 'er up!" shouted the angry fireman.

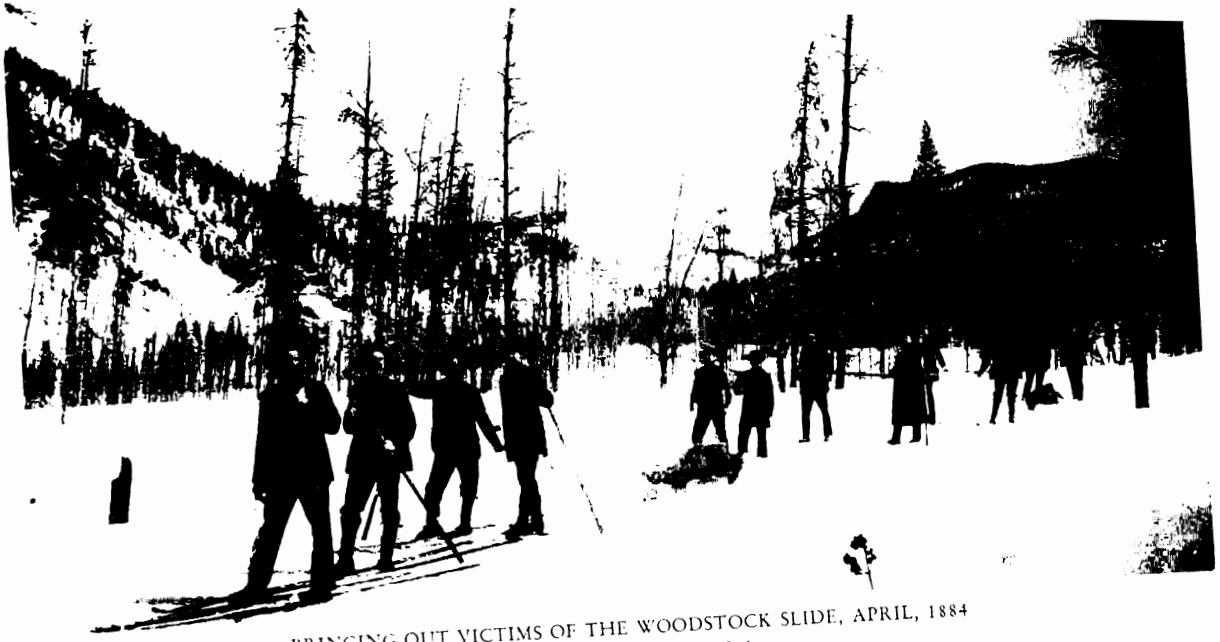
"An' did yez fill 'er up again?" asked Mike.

"Yes, I filled 'er up again."

"Then," said Mike blandly, eying the fireman's sodden clothes, "I can see no reason why it was necessary for yez to stomp it down wid your feet."

Early in the game the South Park equipped their locomotives with "Priest flangers." These were hung directly below the pilots, in front of the pony-truck wheels, and were raised and lowered by an air valve in the cab. A short time later butterfly plows, which were hinged and also raised and lowered by air, were added in place of pilots. When bucking snow an engineer would smash his engine into a drift as fast as she would turn a wheel. When she stuck he simply raised the two flangers and backed out. Thus, no snow dragged back on the rails to form ice.

The South Park heads displayed plenty of ingenuity



BRINGING OUT VICTIMS OF THE WOODSTOCK SLIDE, APRIL, 1884

Men in picture unidentified

on one occasion I know about. One sparkling December morning, back in 1898, Colin Moore was called to fire for Walter Parlins from Gunnison to Alpine Tunnel. In Pitkin they picked up two helper engines and a coach loaded with snow shovelers.

Walter Parlins' engine was equipped with a Priest flanger, so she was placed in the lead. Hammering steadily along they had little trouble in clearing the light drifts into Alpine Station, just west of the tunnel.

Between the station and the tunnel there was a deep cut. This was solidly packed with snow. While the outfit battered away at this cut, the track behind them blew full again. After several hours of enthusiastic but futile toil, it suddenly dawned upon the gang that they were stuck tighter than a drumhead. There was no chance of opening the line through the tunnel and down the east side, and less of getting back to Pitkin. With the coach on the rear end, it would be impossible to buck snow in that direction.

They held a parley. During the course of the argument they decided they could still get back to Pitkin if only they had a locomotive, with a plow on her, headed west. The trouble was that all theirs were headed the wrong direction. Furthermore, at that time, there was no turntable at the mouth of the snowshed leading to Alpine Tunnel. Could they swing the plow engine around in any other manner?

They decided that they could. On the train were half a dozen hydraulic jacks, each capable of lifting thirty tons. There was plenty of valve oil, which would make rails laid at right angles to the wheels slick enough so that a ponderous weight would slip

on them. No sooner thought of than they went to work! First they disconnected the engine from her tender. To get some practice they decided to turn the tender first. Several hours later the engine was back on the rails and headed west!

Colin claimed: "There was nothin' to it. A fellow had to use his head, is all. Even the engine didn't give us much trouble, once we got her flanges above the rails so she'd slide. And after we'd dragged her back as far as the side track at Alpine Station, where we could switch her around the rest of the train, we went sailin' down the mountain like nothin'."

They were big men, working on little engines, and little boxcars and coaches. Most of them have crossed the Great Divide, from which there is no return. Among them are "Silver Tip" Adams, Dad Martinez, Mike O'Hara, Tom Flavin, Curly Culligan, Joe Plunkett, and a host of others. Daredevils and loyal heads, all of them—and artistic snow buckers.

One stormy winter night two little South Park engines—Joe Plunkett was running one of them—coupled to a caboose, were knocking some snow off the track in South Park, between Como and Fairplay. The way it was snowing and blowing, a man couldn't see his hand in front of his face. They were running by "feel" mostly, and their oil headlights threw very little illumination ahead. But they were moving, and so long as they kept moving everything must be okay. That afternoon a rancher had driven a herd of cattle across the track where a short spur left the main line. Consequently, frogs, guard rails, and stub ends were full of ice and snow.

The pair of engines and the caboose wallowed over this and kept right on moving. After some little time the stormclouds broke and a silver chunk of moon showed through. It halfway illuminated the surrounding scenery. Suddenly Joe, who was on the head engine, saw a massive, solid-looking object loom up squarely in front of his engine. He slammed on his brakes, reversed his engine, and blew an imperative stop signal on his whistle.

Halted, the crews unloaded and waded forward to see what the obstruction could be. It proved nothing more formidable than a haystack!

"What blankety-blank rancher dumped his haystack on our main line?" demanded one of the crew.

"It's just possible this haystack ain't on our main line," surmised Joe Plunkett. "Maybe we're trespassin' on somebody's hayland. We'd better find out."

They were! Half a mile across the frozen meadow they finally located their main line. The whole outfit had run along without a hitch. "The only thing I noticed after we left the rails," Joe explained later, "was my engine rode a lot smoother than she did on the track."

The South Park had to send back to St. Louis, Missouri, to get block and tackle long enough to reach that wandering outfit and drag it back on its track where it belonged.

One January evening back in the late 1880's I was loafing in the cigar store when Silver Tip Adams came in. It had been a beautiful winter's day in Gunnison, cold, but no wind blowing. Silver Tip was a little man who raised a beard every winter. Although

he was in his late twenties, the beard was white as snow on the end, hence his moniker.

"You ought to see my engine, Lew," he opened the conversation.

"What happened? Turn her over?" I asked.

He pulled up a chair and sat down. "No," he said, "I just moved the cab back eighteen inches on the boiler."

"How?"

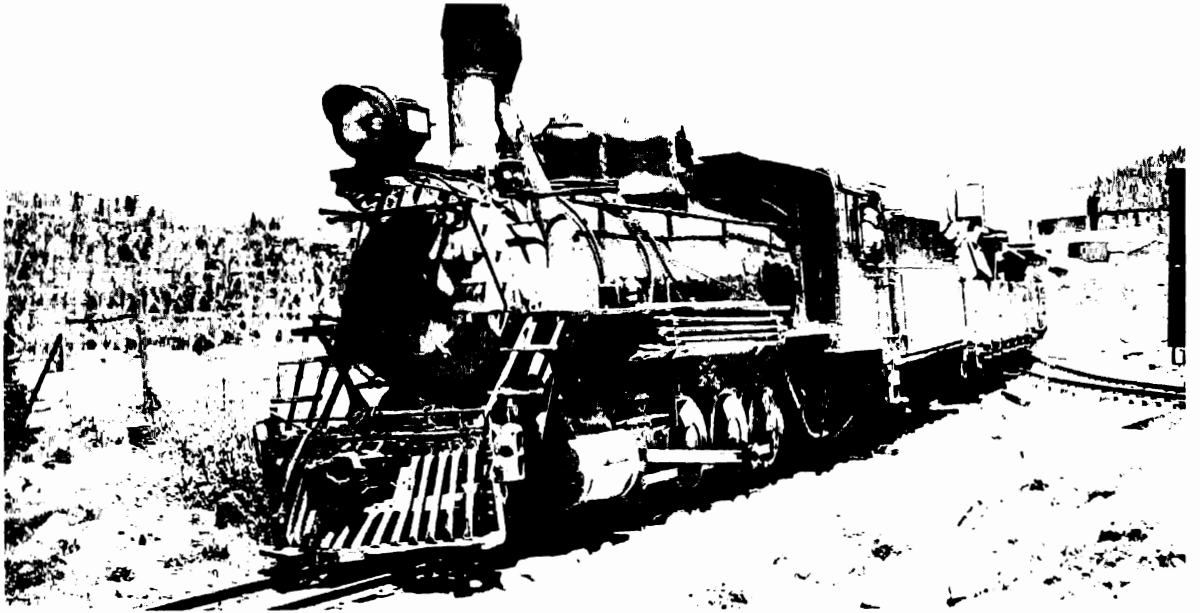
He told me the story:

"We got out of here early this morning. You know how pretty the day was? Just like spring all the way up the west side of Alpine. I'd begun patting myself on the back, thinking what a good run we were going to make when we stopped at Alpine Station to register.

"I was ahead. Mike O'Hara was behind me, and Andy Nelson and Johnny Olson were on the two engines at the hind end of the train. After our brakemen looked them over, we whistled off. We passed the red light in the center of the tunnel going slow and I held them down until we nosed around the curve to where I could look out of the east portal.

"I've never seen such a blizzard as was blowing there. The first cut was level full of snow and I could hardly see my hand in front of my face. I kicked off my brakes, whistled a 'come on' so the boys behind would work steam. I pulled my windows and door closed, and got to my feet.

"We hit the packed snow harder than I've ever hit snow before. I felt the cab move. My front door smashed open and a white avalanche came through and shoved me out of the cab. I wound up in the



LAST ENGINE ON THE ORIGINAL DENVER, SOUTH PARK & PACIFIC

coal pit, half buried. We were stuck tight. The hind engines managed to drag the loads back to Alpine, and after steaming and shoveling out, they pulled my engine free."

Silver Tip hadn't exaggerated. Those South Park heads would waltz up Alpine with a full train. The weather would be perfect, with an afternoon sun melting the snow between the rails. But east of the tunnel they'd run into a glorified hell of howling wind, flying snow, and filled cuts. The springs that dripped through the roof of the tunnel made ice which would quickly have choked the bore, had it not been chopped out every day. The company tried to operate through several winters, but after losing plenty of money maintaining from fifty to one hundred snow shovelers at the pass and bucking out drifts with as many as a dozen engines coupled together, they began closing down the line about mid-December each year and resuming operations the following April. What freight originated on their line from the coal mines was routed over the D. & R.G. during the interim. A stub run operated between Gunnison, Baldwin, and Pitkin. It hauled mostly freight.

I've already stated that the South Park crews were snow-bucking fools. In a way they had a better break than we Rio Grande men. They had the hinged Priest flangers, while our fixed plows always filled the track with snow and ice when we were forced to back out for another run at a snow obstruction.

Quite apart from the superiority of their equipment, one incident clearly shows how South Park

snow artists had us Rio Granders backed off the map. The two South Park engineers in question were Johnny Olson and Andy Nelson, both quiet, unassuming young fellows. Their homes were in Como, division terminal east of Alpine Pass. A sudden snowing in of Alpine one winter in the late 1880's found the pair and their engines marooned in Gunnison. When a locomotive did not work, neither did her engineer. For that reason, Nelson and Olson wanted to get back to Como in the worst way.

At the same time, Marshall Pass, on the Rio Grande, was blocked. Because the Rio Grande could not close its line, what with mail and express contracts to fill, it put all of its snow-fighting equipment to work in a spectacular but futile attempt to beat the massive drifts. Hours passed into days, and days became a week. Still no trains could be moved.

About that time, the South Park engineers decided to take some action. Their line was positively blocked —snow conditions were never as bad on Marshall Pass as they were on Alpine Pass. Also, there was a crossover track from the South Park to the D. & R.G. in Gunnison. So Nelson and Olson went to the dispatcher's office of the latter road.

"I suppose you fellows would like to get some trains to runnin' over Marshall Pass, wouldn't you?" Nelson asked the Rio Grande dispatcher.

"What do you think?" snapped the dispatcher.

Nelson grinned. "Well, me and Olson here," nodding to his brother engineer, "figure if you'll loan us your railroad to Salida, we'll bust her out. You see, we want to get home to our families, but can't do it over Alpine Pass."

The way the Rio Grande was tied up, any chance was worth taking, and the dispatcher did not hesitate. "Just a minute," he told them. "I'll get in touch with Mr. Ridgeway, our superintendent."

Superintendent Ridgeway proved more than willing to co-operate. Added to that, the South Park needed the marooned engines around Como badly. They agreed to go along with the Rio Grande.

An hour later, two South Park engines rattled eastward out of Gunnison on the Rio Grande main line, throwing sparks all over the meadows. Both engineers had running orders to Salida. They had been given right over all trains.

Sargents, thirty miles up the valley and helper town at the foot of Marshall Pass, reported them through forty-five minutes later. Then the snow wilderness swallowed them.

Three hours later the dispatcher almost fell out of his chair when the operator at Marshall Pass reported two South Park engines stopped in front of his station.

"Engineers say tell you line open to here. They anticipate no trouble getting to Salida."

Thus did the laconic message indicate that it was the west side of Marshall Pass that had been blocked!

Two more hours and Salida reported the pair of South Park engines had arrived there. "No great amount of damage to locomotives," came the message. "Am routing them Salida to Buena Vista where they will switch to home line and proceed to Como. We are ordering both freight and passenger service west from here immediately."

Andy Nelson wasn't always so lucky, probably because he was inclined to be a bit cautious. He had a red-haired young fireman named "Polly" Plewes with him that trip. The pair formed a Mutt and Jeff contrast. Polly was tall and skinny. Andy was short, rotund, and blond. The roadmaster gave the pair the task of smashing west over Alpine Pass through unusually heavy drifts. To assist them he had hired every able-bodied, hard-rock miner from Pitkin, giving them jobs of "trenching." This consisted of digging ditches about ten feet wide and down to the rails, at intervals of fifty feet or so, thus giving the snow-bucking engine a chance to get her feet under her between wild lunges.

Along the Palisades, about three miles west of the pass, the snow became so deep the roadmaster called his gang of men to do some trenching. Andy and Polly loafed in the cab of their engine, waiting for a signal to "have at it." At last the snow shovelers scrambled to safety and the roadmaster waved a violent "give it hell!" signal. Andy slid his long reverse lever forward on the quardrant. Polly had his firebox loaded with the best part of a ton of coal, for in bucking snow, a fireman knew better than to stoop above his firebox door and feed scoops of fuel to the hungry maw. Instead, he got into the cab, closed all doors and windows, and prayed that the little locomotive would stay perpendicular with all of its wheels on the rails.

Away they went, yellow smoke changing to thick brown, then soot black as a hurricane exhaust blast fanned the fire. Wham! and they were through the first trench. Wham! and they were through the

second. Then Andy stuck tight. Perhaps it was poor judgement on his part, or it might have been the heavy snow and icy rails. At any rate, it took a couple of hours to thaw and shovel him out, during which time the roadmaster, a fluent Irishman, did some pointed talking about the inability of a certain engineer he'd recently met, and swore that he would wire him in at the first telegraph station.

Andy finally smashed through to Alpine Station, where the roadmaster made good his promise. At Hancock, the next open telegraph station east of the tunnel, Andy was handed a message wanting to know why he'd stuck in the snow the other side of Alpine Pass. At St. Elmo, another message of the same kind awaited him. In fact, all the way to Como, Andy kept getting more messages. He made no comment then, but Polly could tell from the gleam in his eyes that he was doing some heavy thinking.

Next morning the pair were run back to Pitkin. There they were given orders to flange the line to Hancock, where they would meet a four-engine train going to Gunnison.

Andy hammered the drifted snow off the rails to Alpine Station. Again he was handed a message, still wanting to know why he'd allowed his engine to get stuck the day before. When the little engineer climbed back on his engine his lips were a thin line. He rattled into the tunnel and finally nosed out on the eastern slope. There was plenty of new snow, but they tossed it off the track until they came to a stretch which was wind-swept clear. Andy stopped.

"Better get a load of coal in the firebox," he in-

structed Polly, and dropped to the ground to make sure his running gear was okay.

Polly looked ahead. Beyond the wind-swept stretch of track the rails were buried with from six to ten feet of drifted snow as far as he could see. He heaved in enough coal to fill the firebox to the crown sheet. The boiler had three solid gauges of water, and he knew she was ready to do a job of snow bucking.

Andy returned to the cab, still madder than a hornet. Instead of starting forward, he reversed his engine, released the brakes, and backed into Alpine Tunnel. At the red light which burned twenty-four hours a day and marked the exact center of the bore, Polly heard the latch drag across the notches of the quadrant. He made sure his doors and windows were closed.

Andy worked steam down the nine hundred feet of tunnel grade and the engine shot from the entrance like a heavy projectile from the mouth of a long-range gun. Polly shut his eyes and began saying all the prayers he knew.

When they hit the drifts, the front doors on both sides of the cab smashed open. A wave of heavy, packed snow surged inside, picked up Polly and carried him into the tender where he was wedged against the coal gates. The last thing he saw was Andy hanging to the wide-open throttle with both hands, while his body stood straight back, held thus by the seething white river that poured through the cab.

If the train they were to meet at Hancock hadn't been there with the main line switch thrown for the wye, no telling where Andy, Polly, and the engine would have wound up. As it was, she rolled into the

wye, shaking herself free of snow and Andy succeeded in halting her before she went over the dead end.

Polly picked himself out of the tender and shook the snow from his eyes and nose. Not a red coal was left in the firebox. Not a flutter of water hissed from the bottom gauge cock. He crawled back into the cab. Andy looked across the boiler at him. Suddenly his face broke into a wide grin.

"You're a brave boy, Polly!" he exclaimed admiringly. "I didn't think you had it in you. By golly I'm gonna buy you a present for sticking with me like you did today. I'll buy you anything you want. Name it!"

Polly spat out a mouthful of snow. "All I want," he announced soberly, "is a suit of clean underwear."

The Alpine Tunnel end of the South Park was closed late in 1893 when it snowed in. It stayed closed until the spring of '95, when the company decided to reopen it again.

During this period a stub run operated between Baldwin and Pitkin, via Gunnison. Dad Martinez was engineer. His locomotive, The Beckenridge, had a diamond stack, as did all of the Mason Bogies. She was a pretty little engine, weighing about fifteen tons. Her three pairs of drive wheels formed one truck, the three pairs of tender wheels, another. Both trucks were swiveled to take the sharp curves. These Masons had forerunners of modern, vestibuled cabs. Even the coal pit was housed over so engine crews were sheltered from any kind of weather.

Dad Martinez was a patriarchal old fellow who wore a snow-white, flowing beard which fell over

the front of his vest and hid his watch chain. Mike Flavin was conductor. Mike Byrnes, a young Irishman, was fireman, and tall, blue-eyed, sandy-complected Elmer England was brakeman.

When reopening operations commenced Dad Martinez and his crew were called to take a work train to Alpine Tunnel and clean out the 1,800-foot hole. A cave-in of rocks at the east portal had left an opening less than two feet high. Water from a year-round spring had backed up against the cave-in and formed a subterranean lake inside the tunnel.

Getting to Alpine Station was only a day's job and the crew tied up there for the night. Next morning, after a laborer named Oscar Cammann walked through from the west end and came back to report the cave-in, it was decided to take the engine and coach and go as far as they could. From there they intended setting up a syphon to drain away the water so they could remove the rubble.

They halted the Mason with her sweeping cowcatcher resting in the backed-up water and set to work. It is doubtful if any member of the crew gave a thought to the creeping death which oozed from the diamond stack of the engine.

Elmer England was the only man who emerged alive from Alpine Tunnel. Dad Martinez was found still sitting upright in the cab, his left hand grasping the throttle. Mike Flavin had staggered a few hundred yards toward the west before the deadly gas got him. Oscar Cammann and Mike Byrnes had tried to crawl to safety, but never made it.

So Alpine Tunnel chalked up a score of four men that day. When the bore was finally opened, the

South Park put on a daily passenger train between Gunnison and Denver. The 197, a Brooks Mogul with a balloon stack was assigned to this train and the 211-mile run was made in ten hours, beating the time of the D. & R.G. by some six hours.

In the autumn of 1910 the last South Park train pulled out of Gunnison and headed east. The whistles of the chuffing little locomotives were mournful and the steam which squirrel-tailed from safety valves seemed almost to sob. One of the most colorful of all Colorado's narrow gauges had abandoned its line from Gunnison to Como.

CHAPTER XI

PROMOTION TO ENGINEER

THE opening of the La Veta Hotel, which I mentioned earlier in this story, was celebrated by a grand ball, and a special train carried notables from all over the state. Constructed at a cost of $250,000, it was the most lavish hostelry west of the Mississippi. Gunnison had hoped to become a steel center, but Pueblo had attained that honor. Rudyard Kipling stayed at the La Veta in 1889, and General Grant was also a guest about that time. A perusal of the old registers would bring to light some interesting and valuable signatures. A few years ago the building was torn down, all but the first story, which was rebuilt into apartments.

We Rio Grande men had our private table in the dining room. Picture us, a dozen young engineers, fireman, conductors, and brakeman, wearing our derby hats, striped trousers with narrow bottoms, high-lapel coats, and various shapes and shades of mustaches. All of us smoked good cigars. We were on terms of easy familiarity with the waitresses. I had lost a lot of my bashfulness, but my heart was still whole.

In 1886, four years after I went to work as an engine wiper in the roundhouse at Chama, New Mexico, I gained my heart's desire; I was promoted to engineer. During the past three years I had fired the night passenger train for George Porter, and any credit I may have earned through my ability as an engineer down through the years I owe to him. He coached me, taught me, and many times let me take the throttle under his guidance.

My first job was running a one-man switch engine in the Grand Junction yards. She was a little six-wheeled saddle-tanked engine, and I did my own firing. My pay was very good. After a man was promoted he ran a switch engine for six months at $3.00 per day, six months at $3.50 a day, and at the end of the year became a full-fledged runner at $4.00 per day. I was proud of myself and of my little engine, the Eleven-Spot. I felt I owned her, and I kept her shined and polished, worked on her machinery when I had time, and babied her like a man nowadays does a brand-new automobile.

My first road engine was the 256, a diamond-stack Baldwin, 2-8-0, weighing about thirty tons. On my first trip west from Gunnison I pulled Number 73, red-ball freight. I made a good run all the way to Delta, and was still making a good run below Delta, around the curves in Whitewater Canyon, when we nosed around a corner and out on a tangent where willows grew against the ends of the ties, almost hiding the rails. None of us in the cab saw it because the willows concealed it, but some time during the preceding night a boulder had bounded off the top and struck the outside rail. The rail had snapped and one

part stuck several inches above the other. We were less than a dozen feet away when I saw it. I yelled a warning to my fireman to jump. I went out the window after setting my straight air brakes and reversing the engine. I lit on my feet at the edge of the river and plunged in. A mental image of cars following me, bent on my destruction, propelled my feet and I was in the water above my waist before I remembered I couldn't swim a stroke.

I turned to find 256 on her left side, the cars crowding up on her but staying on the rails. My fireman and brakeman were unhurt. The broken rail had climbed up the pilot, gone through the smokebox, and, after penetrating the petticoat pipe, had deeply dented the flue sheet.

Shortly after this, my brother, Walter C. Lathrop, always known to his family as Carl, who, the reader will remember, was fired for collecting cash fares near Chama and blackballed off the D. & R.G., came to Grand Junction. The master mechanic there was short of men. He saw in Carl the makings of a good engineman and wanted to hire him. But the blackball intervened. Finally the master mechanic called me to his office and between us we found a way out.

"Lew," he told me, "I'd like to hire your brother, Walter, but he's blackballed."

I nodded. "Walter C. Lathrop is blackballed," I agreed. "But you have nothing against Carl Lathrop, have you?"

"That's good." He began chuckling. "Send that kid brother around to see me in the morning."

So Carl Lathrop went to work on the narrow gauge again, without changing his name. He merely drop-

ped his first one. He eventually became one of the best engineers working over Marshall Pass—until the wandering bug hit him. He drifted all over the country, from Canada to Old Mexico. For several months he ran a locomotive on the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad, another colorful narrow gauge. Later in this volume about Colorado narrow gauges, I will tell you of the F. & C.C. and of Carl's experiences there.

About the time I was promoted, the 276, another Baldwin, came from the back shops in Salida completely overhauled. She had new, full tires. The first engineer who took her out on a breaking-in run said she was the easiest riding locomotive he had ever operated. One day she slipped a tire. She was towed to Grand Junction where the tire was removed and a new one ordered. In due time it arrived, was heated a cherry red, slipped over the wheel, and allowed to shrink tightly into place. When the 276 went back into service the first crew catching her refused to take her out again. They claimed she rode so rough they couldn't stay in her cab. The master mechanic had her wedges dropped to make sure none of them were stuck. The next crew taking her out had the same complaint as the first.

Everything possible was done to improve her riding qualities. Different officials from the mechanical department went out with the engine crews and tried to find the trouble. This went on for about a month. Then I was called to run her. Those Grant 200's I'd fired between Salida and Pueblo rode like Pullmans in comparison to this little Baldwin. It seemed she

would shake every pipe and fixture off her boiler. It was impossible for a crew to stay in her cab. The faster she ran the rougher she rode. As I was coming back to Grand Junction a bright idea struck me. When I reached the roundhouse I headed for the master mechanic's office.

"I think I know what's wrong with the 276," I told him.

He was skeptical, but agreed to listen.

"I think she's got one wheel larger, or smaller, than the others," I said.

"Bosh!" he snorted. "That engine came from the back shops with all new tires. The one she slipped was replaced from stock. It is exactly the same size as the others."

"Maybe you're right," I agreed. "But did you try calipering it?"

"I don't think so. I'll do that right this minute, just to convince you you're having pipe dreams." He led the way outside.

That one tire was a half inch larger than the others! When it was turned down to exact size and replaced, the little 276 was once more the best-riding engine we had.

One of the smaller locomotives bought early in the history of the narrow gauge rode smoothly at slow speeds. But when she was stepped up to fifteen miles an hour she loped. At twenty she galloped, and at twenty-five she literally jumped her way along. The mechanical department finally found the trouble. In building her wheels, the counterbalances had been

placed one spoke off center. The Baldwin Locomotive Works sent a new set of drivers to replace them.

The physical characteristics of the country through which the narrow gauges operated made for groups of the most colorful characters possible to imagine.

Patrick Maloney was the oldest conductor on the Third Division, having run a work train during construction. He was a strapping, big Irishman with an eternal twinkle in his eyes, and everybody swore by him. Pat had more ready wit than any man I've ever known. He was at Marshall Pass with a work train during the winter of '88. Superintendent Ridgeway was there also, in charge of some fifty brawny snow shovelers. The gang was moving snow away from the east entrance to the snowshed at the pass. It was bitterly cold, with a west wind howling down from the flank of Mount Ouray. Pat was shivering, hands shoved deeply in his overcoat pockets, shoulders hunched against the icy blast. Finally Ridgeway strode over to him.

"Pat," he shouted above the wind, "take a shovel and do a little work. It will warm you up, get some blood to circulating so you won't have to stand there shivering and half frozen to death!"

Pat fixed Ridgeway with twinkling eyes. "Mr. Ridgeway," he said, "yez have a gang av fifty men who are paid a lot less wages than I am fer doin' that kind av work."

One summer day shortly after noon, Pat Maloney's freight train left Montrose with a 110-degree sun blazing against the car roofs. Pat, riding in the caboose cupola, saw his head brakeman coming over

the tops of the cars toward him and conceived an idea. Why not ease the boredom of the job by pulling a good joke on the head brakeman? Pat took his rear brakeman into his confidence and the plot was laid.

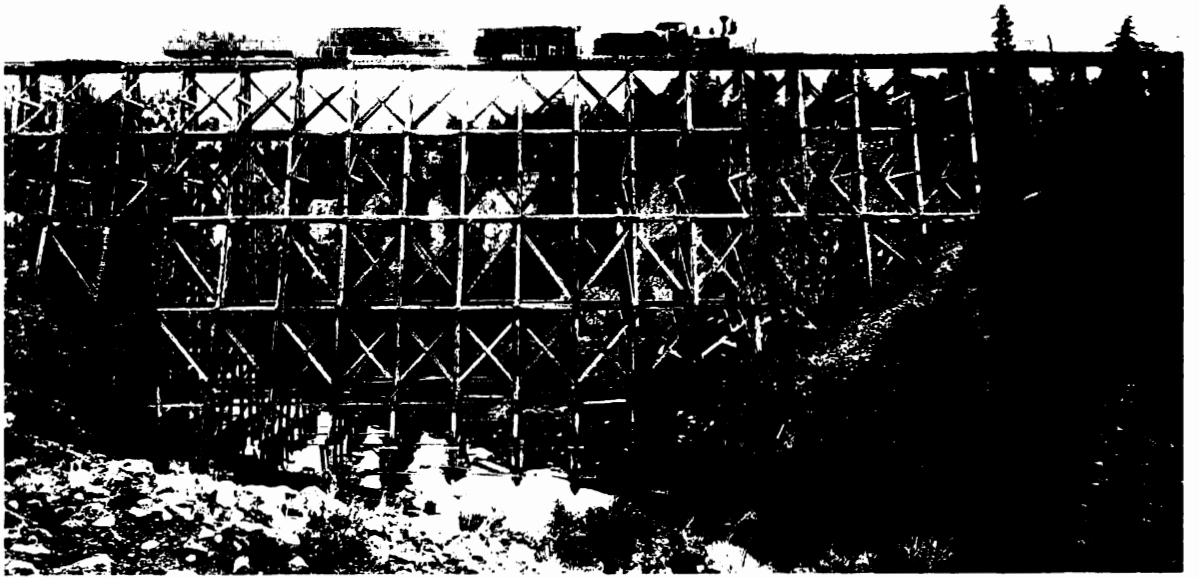
When the head man entered the caboose Pat and the other brakeman pounced on him. They stripped him to his skin and shoved him out on the rear platform where the rays of the sun were concentrated. Then they slammed the door and locked it in his face. There they kept their victim, stark-naked, until they were almost to Grand Junction, about seventy miles away. During that time they passed through Delta, a sizable town.

After the head brakeman was baked to a nice, rosy red, he was admitted to the caboose again. He took it all in good fun. The rest of the crew enjoyed the manner in which he jumped when they slapped him on the sunburned back during the next few days.

Naturally, he wanted to get even with Pat, and he finally bribed the rear brakeman to help him. A few trips later, when they were leaving Montrose, the pair pounced on Pat. They did not undress him—merely shoved him into a caboose locker and shut the door. These lockers were just large enough for a man to stand erect in, and they could not be opened from the inside.

At first the conductor accepted it as a good joke on himself, even when the pair left him locked up while they were stopped in Delta. Leaving Delta, though, Pat began tire of the fun. From begging them to release him, he began to curse. The longer he cursed, the madder he got.

They stopped in Whitewater and the two brakemen



Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

RIO GRANDE NARROW-GAUGE TRAIN ON THE TRESTLE OVER THE LAKE FORK BRANCH OF THE GUNNISON RIVER IN THE EARLY 1890's.

unloaded. The Irish section foreman there inquired:

"Sure, an' where's Pat today?"

"It's a sad thing," explained the head brakeman soberly. "Coming out of Montrose today, Pat suddenly went crazy. We overcome him and locked him in a caboose locker where he is now. We wired the sheriff in Grand Junction to come and meet us when we arrive. He'll have to be put into a padded cell."

The boss almost broke his neck rushing over to the caboose. Pat heard him enter, and resumed his cursing, raving and yelling what he was going to do when he got out. The section foreman soothed him with words of pity. *And left him right where he was.*

By the time they reached Grand Junction, Pat was so wild the two brakemen were afraid to let him out. So they hunted up the sheriff, told him to take along a couple of deputies, and release Pat from the locker.

"You'd better tie him up," cautioned the brakemen. "Hold him all night for observation, because we think he's crazy."

It took a lot of explaining on the part of brakemen, engineer, and fireman next morning to convince the sheriff that Pat wasn't really insane. He almost did not get out on his run.

Two bulletins put out by D. & R.G. officials were masterpieces of their kind. The first was issued by a new trainmaster.

The narrow gauge had been having trouble with cattle shipments. It seems all the cattle would head in the same direction after being loaded in cars. When they grew restless, the car would begin to rock. A few cars jumped the track or turned over because of

restlessness on the part of the cattle. The new bulletin solved the trouble—on paper. It read:

"Effective at once. Hereafter, all cattle will be loaded in cars heads and tails."

But this bulletin created a whole flock of new problems. The first stock train under the new bulletin was ordered to go to Sapinero, a town at the east end of the Black Canyon. A cattleman there had about 250 head of stock to load for market. The stock cars carried nine to twelve larger animals, or sixteen head of small ones. The trainmen wanted to respect the new bulletin. They told the cowboys who would load the stock about it.

Some four hours later a telegram from the conductor of the stock train was received by the new trainmaster.

"Please send at once 250 halters, account of cattle too dumb to stand heads and tails after loaded in car."

The stockman got his stuff loaded after some ten hours, and after a new bulletin, annulling the other one, was issued.

The second bulletin was put out by a new superintendent. Tonnage was too heavy, and water tanks were too far apart, so trains were being left while engines cut loose and ran for water. The new super stopped this with:

"In the future when necessary for locomotive to run for water, engineers will take their trains with them."

A young fireman named George Rusk worked out of Gunnison. He fired for an engineer named Billy Cook. Billy Cook was an extremely nervous man,

so much so that he jumped at the least unusual noise in his cab, and he worried constantly.

All the lights on our locomotives burned oil, and the fireman had to keep them filled and polished.

As a fireman, George was okay, but he was brimming over with the Old Nick and liked to be playing jokes on somebody all the time. Billy Cook offered a natural target. On his first trip out with Billy, George began singing after they left Sapinero and dove into the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Rocks were constantly tumbling down on the track. The oil headlights did not illuminate the track over fifty feet ahead. George's singing would not have been so nerve-racking if he'd picked any other tune beside "Rock of Ages." But that was his song and he put much emphasis on the "Rock" part of it.

Every time George bellowed his "*Rock* of ages," Billy Cook would grab for his straight air valve and almost tumble out of his cab window trying to see a rock in the feeble glow of the headlight.

Finally, Billy got mad. He stood up on his hinged seat—he was a little fellow—and bawled across the boiler: "George, why in hell do you keep yellin' 'rocks' all the time?"

"I'm not," George shouted back. "I'm only singin'."

"If you sing another line of your 'rock' song," threatened Billy, "I'll turn you in when we get back to Gunnison."

George alternated between singing a brand new song, "With his eye upon the throttle, and his hand upon the rail," and beating the apron between cab

and tender with his coal pick during the balance of the trip.

When they returned to Gunnison Billy went to the roundhouse foreman and turned George in. Since the engineer was supreme over his fireman, the foreman could do nothing but pull George out of service. Only there was not another fireman available to take George's place. He capitulated by promising Billy that he would have a serious talk with George. He hunted up the culprit, gave him a good lecture on his damn-foolishness, and extracted his promise not to worry Billy during his next trip.

Since he would make one more trip with Billy, George decided to polish the headlight reflector on their engine. He drew a supply of the polish, which was a blood-red soap, from the supply man. When the reflector gleamed to his satisfaction, George dropped a fist-sized piece of the polish into his seat box and went home.

On the next trip George was everything the perfect fireman should be. He refrained from singing while they were going through the Black Canyon. He beat no tattoo on the apron with his coal pick. He kept the boiler with full steam pressure.

They started the five-and-a-half-mile climb to Cerro Summit with two helper engines assisting them. Near Slide Bridge, about a mile above Cimarron, George put in a good fire, then entered his side of the cab. He ducked down out of sight and fished his red reflector polish out of his seat box. After breaking off a walnut-sized piece of it, he placed it in his mouth and began to chew. When his cheeks were bulging with the blood-red foam, he suddenly gave vent to

a mighty groan and bobbed his head above the boiler top. When Billy turned startled eyes toward him, George shook his head from side to side and spat the red foam all over the cab.

Billy dove out his cab window. The engineer on the next engine behind halted the train. George nearly lost his job over the stunt and he never did make another trip with Billy Cook.

They called him "Hog" Riley because he never missed a trip on his engine, but hogged all the mileage he could. Although there was no sixteen-hour law to limit the time on duty, most enginemen were forced to lay off once in a while to get rested. Hog Riley never did. What rest Hog Riley got was snatched going down the 4 per cent grade. In release, the straight air valves in the cabs were pulled back toward the engineer. Riley would pull his valve back, then go to sleep. As he slumped forward, he would push the valve to application position. By the time his engine was almost stopped he would wake up and repeat the performance. Fortunately he never had a runaway during the years he worked on the narrow gauge.

CHAPTER XII

BRANCH-LINE BUILDING

IN 1888 our railroad built a thirty-six-mile branch from Montrose to Ouray, Colorado. Some of the richest gold mines in the state were located there, and the Camp Bird mine was the most famous of them all. I caught a job on one of the construction trains. At the town of Old Dallas (no longer in existence) was a railroad camp. Prior to this time, Old Dallas had been a stagecoach terminal, and the coaches still operated into there.

It was quite exciting to see the evening stage come into town from the east. A quarter of a mile away the driver would whip his eight horses into a dead run. Then he would raise his horn to his lips and the mournful blast would herald his arrival. The coach, enveloped in alkali dust, would bound into sight, driver standing erect, blowing his horn and yelling at his horses between blasts. Before the stagecoach depot the driver would put his booted foot on the brake and shove down hard, at the same time pulling back on the reins with all his strength. The horses would rear back, the brakes would squeal, and the stagecoach would be halted for the passengers to unload.

The stage drivers had little use for us railroaders because we represented the end of their era.

I pulled the first passenger train into Old Dallas. My engine was the 153, a trim-lined little shotgun stack.

Shortly after I handled this passenger train, I caught a work train which would tie up in the town of Ouray and work out of there for several weeks. A red-haired fellow by the name of Charley Stewart was my fireman. The call for the work train caught both of us short of money. We had no credit in Ouray and an inventory showed our total finances at sixty-five cents. Knowing we were going to be out of luck for grub and a place to sleep unless drastic measures were taken, I suggested that we pool our resources and I'd take them and see what I could do. Charley agreed.

After washing up and changing clothes that first evening I took the sixty-five cents and threw out my chest like I had half a million dollars in my pocket. I headed toward the Bon Ton, the biggest gambling place in town.

Roulette had always intrigued me and I pushed my way through a mob around the wheel and placed my sixty five-cent bet. My number hit, paying thirty-five for one. The outcome was that Charley and I rented the best room in the Belvedere Hotel, the best place in town. We ate the finest meals on the menu, even had champagne sent up to us a few times, and entertained a number of girls from the Temple of Music. When we were ordered back to Gunnison we had fifteen dollars apiece!

There were several work trains along the Ouray

branch, cleaning up and doing odd jobs. One of these was tying up nights at Old Dallas. Since there was no water tank at Old Dallas, the engineer had a permanent order to back down to Cow Creek every evening between five and six to fill his tender and a water car.

One day Superintendent Ridgeway was making a tour of inspection with his private outfit, consisting of his glassed-in car, an accommodation coach, and his little eight-wheeled engine. At Montrose, Ridgeway had his outfit turned so they could back up the branch, the better to allow him to inspect the new piece of railroad. He was riding the observation end of his car.

At Cow Creek, when the engineer stopped to take on water, he dropped from the cab and walked back to the private car. "How about that work train?" the engineer asked. "They've got rights over us between here and Old Dallas. It's 5:10 P. M. now."

"To hell with that work train," decided Ridgeway. "My special is superior to all trains. Get back on your engine and let's go."

They pulled out. Ridgeway's special met the work train on a sharp curve about a mile below Old Dallas. They came together with a crash. The water car went through the glassed-in end of Ridgeway's private car, spilling its contents and almost drowning the superintendent. He came outside, his white goatee standing straight out. He fired every man on both crews, but cooled down after the work train engineer showed him his permanent orders giving him right of track between Old Dallas and Cow Creek. Ridgeway hired the whole gang to go back to work. A

wrecking outfit came from Gunnison and cleaned up the mess. Not a word was ever heard about the collision. How Ridgeway hushed it up is a mystery to this day.

In 1889 a thirty-six-mile branch was built from Sapinero to Lake City, another booming mining camp at the headwaters of the Lake Fork River. Fifteen miles of this was through a canyon with walls several hundred feet high. It cost a tremendous amount of money to build and never did pay out. As usual, I was on a work train up there.

About ten miles from Lake City the railroad had to bridge the Lake Fork. When completed the trestle would be 135 feet above the river and about 800 feet long. It was decided to construct the bridge of wood and bids were asked for, material included. The contract was awarded to a man named Williams, who bid $7,500 for the complete structure! He made money at it, although over a million board feet of lumber was used. The adjacent mountainsides were heavily timbered. Williams set up a sawmill and hired a crew at two dollars a day per man for the job. The structure became known as the "High Bridge" and served faithfully until the Lake City branch was abandoned and torn up in the early 1930's.

While the Lake City branch was being built, a young engineer named Pete Ready put in a bid to run the locomotive up there. He was awarded the job and for almost forty years he piloted the daily except Sunday train. Pete knew every spike and tie on the branch. For some twenty-five years of the time, he had the 34, a little Baldwin Consolidated. Once a month she was brought to Gunnison for a boiler wash

and inspection. On her last trip, the boilermaker crawled into the boiler through the steam dome. He found the crown sheet so thin he could drive shingle nails through it with one blow of his hammer! The engine had never shown a leak, although she carried 130 pounds of steam. She was pulled out of service and junked.

Lake City was a typical mining town with a daily shooting. Every man went around with one or two six-shooters hanging from his hips. Tens of thousands of dollars' worth of rich ore was high-graded by the miners, most of whom carried it out a pound or two each shift. It benefited them but little. Most of their ill-gotten gains were promptly lost in the gambling halls.

Between Ridgeway and Telluride, another booming gold camp, Otto Mears, a little Russian-Jew, was building the narrow gauge Rio Grande Southern. I was borrowed from the D. & R.G. to run a work-train engine on the R.G.S. I was there a full month and boarded with a man by the name of Woods. Woods had operated a stagecoach and wagon-train line before the advent of the railroad, and he was still carrying on with greatly reduced forces. When rails were laid along one of his routes, he moved his whole outfit on. He owned a big boardinghouse and fed the railroad construction gangs as well as his own drivers. Woods used fine, large horses on his stagecoaches, which carried express, mail, and passengers. Usually, four to six horses were put on a coach. For his "fast freight" he used mules, six to eight on a wagon. The driver would ride the wheel mule and guide the leaders with a jerk line. The wheel mules did little pulling,

their job being to carry the wagon tongue and help hold the heavy loads back on the steep, mountain grades. The "slow freight" was handled by oxen. He had forty span of them, eighty powerful animals. I've seen ten span of oxen toiling along with a fifty-horsepower boiler loaded on heavy wagons. They averaged about ten miles per day and were urged forward by a driver who walked. He carried a "driving stick," which he used continuously. To guide his plodding cattle, he yelled, "gee," or "haw" as the occasion demanded. The oxen were patient animals, plodding along with their tongues hanging from the sides of their mouths. But they were hardy brutes, and plenty of green food and water at the end of a day's journey was all they demanded.

When one realizes that nearly all of the heavy mining machinery and boilers were brought into the Rocky Mountain country long before the advent of the railroads, one can appreciate the part the wagon trains played, with their mules and their oxen.

I was not sorry when I was finally sent back to my railroad to work out of Gunnison once more.

CHAPTER XIII

SAM MONTGOMERY

RAILROADING in those early days was a hazardous occupation anywhere across this broad land. But I think the mountainous territories were the worst. In addition to weaknesses, and hazards of equipment, we bucked Mother Nature at her best, and at her worst. There were the 4 per cent grades, main lines crooked as corkscrews, and runaways. There were violent thunderstorms during the summer months. These usually ended in cloudbursts. In winter we combated snow slides which thundered down the mountainsides, and freezing cold and blizzards. Most of our tracks were gouged from mountainsides with the resultant tumbling of rocks and mud slides. I've seen electric storms which sent balls of fire rolling down the rails ahead of my engine. I've never heard of a locomotive being struck by lightning.

One of our engineers who ran an engine over Cerro Summit for a number of years was an infidel. That would have been okay had he kept his beliefs to himself. But he had to tell everybody about it. One day he was drifting down a long piece of tangent, running

with a light engine. Suddenly he began raving, denying the existence of a Supreme Being. As he warmed to his subject he dared God to come down and give him some sign of His existence. The fireman listened with disgust to the tirade but made no comment. Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning was followed by a ball of fire which danced down the rails directly ahead of the engine, half blinding the crew. The fire ball disappeared about a mile way. The infidel engineer swallowed a few times, turned white, and sat down on his seat without saying another word. For several months thereafter, he made no mention of his disbelief in a Supreme Being.

In my memory I see a cloud of black smoke off against the western range. Closer at hand a gang of section men are tamping ties. A distant whistle causes all heads to raise, all eyes to turn toward the smoke smudge on the distant horizon.

"Here she comes, byes!" says the boss.

The men drop their shovels as a three-car train draws up and halts beside them. The rear car is glassed in, and partitioned off with a wicket cut in the partition. Paymaster J. O. O'Conner stands ready to hand out the men's monthly earnings. The pay car has arrived.

In the turbulent nineties it was usually an engineer named Charley "Posey" Krall who handled this all-important train. The time came when I was called to take it around the circuit. We enginemen and trainmen knew what to do when we caught the pay car. We took along our bedrolls because we would have to sleep, eat, and work on the outfit until we

had covered the five-hundred-odd miles which made up our part of the narrow gauge. The pay car train consisted of O'Conner's glassed-in coach, a bunk car for the crew, and an oil car which supplied all section houses with kerosene, signal oil, and other supplies.

Mr. O'Conner was the company's best-known official, because he met every employee from flunky on up. He was tall and skinny, hatchet-faced and ascetic, and he was not healthy. Everybody welcomed his visits just the same. Between twelve and fifteen thousand men worked for the D. & R.G. O'Conner knew every one of them by name. He had to meet a man but once to have that man's face stamped indelibly on his brain. The next time that man stepped up to the wicket, O'Conner would call him by name while he paid him off in gold and silver.

On the trip I handled the pay car, we left Somerset, on the North Fork branch, about 1:00 P. M. A short distance from there the brakeman came over to the engine to pinch hit for my fireman so the latter could go back to O'Conner's car and eat. This eating arrangement avoided any delay along the line. When my fireman finally returned to the engine he told me: "O'Conner says for me to run the engine while you go back and get your dinner, Lew."

Since my fireman was an old-enough head to be reliable, I turned the engine over to him and headed for the hind car.

I was hungry with the zest of my youth and robust health. My mouth watered as I entered O'Conner's car and sat down at the table. A Negro waiter brought my meal. On the platter was one small lamb chop. A tiny bowl held a spoonful of green peas. There

was a dab of mashed potatoes, two thin slices of bread, some canned apricots, and a cup of coffee. This may have constituted a full meal for a dyspeptic official, but to me it was a starvation diet. I ate the entire meal in about two bites.

The waiter came in again. "Anything else you want, boss?" he asked.

Too disgusted to answer, I shook my head, got up from the table, returned to my engine cab, and took over the throttle again.

About six thirty that evening we reached Cerro Summit. The conductor started to go into the depot for orders. I stopped him.

"Order supper for me at Mrs. Mack's," I told him.

Mrs. Mack ran the section house in Cimarron, five and a half miles down the 4 per cent grade. She was a wonderful cook and served up man-sized portions.

"Make it two," called my fireman.

The brakeman had come over and he heard us. "Order for me, too," he said, rubbing his stomach.

"I'll make it unanimous," the conductor put in.

O'Conner had come up in time to hear the last. "What's the idea?" he asked. "You men will get your suppers on the pay car so we won't lose a lot of time in Cimarron while you eat."

"I'm eating in Cimarron, Mr. O'Conner," I told him. "You don't get another chance to starve me." And I enumerated what I'd been served for dinner.

He turned red as a beet, stuttered, then finally apologized: "I'm not much of a hearty eater myself, and I'm afraid I figured everybody eats like I do. I'm sorry about it. If you'll run Cimarron, I'll guarantee you a banquet on the pay car."

We ate at Mrs. Mack's anyhow, to teach him a lesson. From that day on, crews eating on the pay car were abundantly fed.

Ask me to name the most capable man around motive power that I've ever known, and I'll tell you "Sam Montgomery." But he was like a reckless fellow, too full of the devil to remain on one job for long. Sam was a handsome, well-built young buck with dancing brown eyes, wavy brown hair, and one dimple on his left cheek.

He was running the engine on a work train while a few bluffs were being cut off and the curvatures lessened between Cebolla and Sapinero. About thirty Italian laborers were employed on the job. One day I heard the boss tell the operator at Sapinero:

"Thisa fellow, Sam, he's a one fine engineer, but he run lika hell. So we watch Mister Sam. When Mister Sam grab d' hat and pull it down over his eyes, we all graba hold, shut our eyes, and a hang on. We know Mister Sam is gonna run like a crazy!"

Sam and I became great friends while he worked on the D. & R.G. Suddenly he got the wanderlust and quit. He went down to Florence, Colorado, and hired out to run a locomotive on the now abandoned Florence and Cripple Creek narrow gauge. The F. & C. C. was a crooked stretch of mountain railroad with heavy grades and sharp curves. The trains were equipped with straight air. Coming down from Victor with a string of heavy ore concentrates, an engineer was kept plenty busy holding the cars to a safe speed.

This trip, Sam was jogging along, making a nice run down the mountain with a string of loads. The

Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

THE ROYAL GORGE OF THE ARKANSAS RIVER, COLORADO, ABOUT 1880

A Denver & Rio Grande narrow-gauge passenger train at the famous "Hanging Bridge"

straight air valve in the engine cab was a two-way cock operated by a straight handle. This handle was not riveted on, but could be lifted off at will. Sam, probably for want of something better to do, lifted the handle off the valve. Suddenly he dropped it. It hit the cab floor, rolled to where the reverse lever came through, and was gone into the cinders. Sam had no time to fish out a wrench and set his brakes, because by this time they were running away. His engine turned over on a curve. Sam was scalded. I visited him in the Salida Hospital and all I could see of his face were his eyes and the tip of his nose. But he was husky and soon got well.

Sam was fired off the F. & C.C. He drifted to Denver where he went to work on the Santa Fe as engineer between Pueblo and Denver. The Santa Fe was standard gauge.

One day one of their engines broke down and the engineer had to disconnect his engine. When he started to take down the straps holding the main rod to the pin he found the straps stuck so tightly it was impossible to get them loose. After working at them for over an hour, he finally wired for another locomotive to come out and drag him and his train to town.

The Santa Fe officials frowned on engine failures. They called the engineer on the carpet and severely criticized his lack of judgment, although they had no suggestions to offer as to how he could have loosened those stuck straps.

Sam Montgomery heard about it and, being cocksure about everything, said he could have loosened the straps easily.

"How?" asked the reprimanded engineer.

"By giving your engine a little steam."

"By golly, Sam, I never thought about that! You're right. If it ever happens to me again, I'll know what to do."

Less than two weeks later the same engineer had a similar breakdown. He went to work confidently. When he came to the straps holding the rod on the pin, he found them stuck tight again. This time he climbed into his cab, dropped his reverse lever into forward motion and fed steam into the cylinders. There was a crash. The cylinder head was smashed out, piston bent, and the engine completely stripped on that side. The engineer was called on the carpet again. This time he was assessed thirty days vacation without pay.

"That was a dumb thing to do," the master mechanic told him. "You should have known better."

"Sam Montgomery told me it would work, and it did sound reasonable," argued the engineer.

The master mechanic sent for Sam and accused him: "So and so tells me that you advised him to feed a little steam to his engine to loosen those stuck straps. Is that true?"

Sam nodded wisely. "It is."

"Which makes you as dumb as he was!"

Sam did not change expression. "Only I guess I forgot to tell him the rest. He should have blocked the crosshead so it couldn't let the piston knock out the cylinder head."

The master mechanic was astonished. "You're right, Montgomery! I'll issue a bulletin instructing

our men what to do next time they have to disconnect an engine."

So Sam, by quick thinking, set himself ace high with the Santa Fe.

The Santa Fe, bucking the D. & R.G. and still smarting over its defeat in the Royal Gorge war, put on a fast freight between Denver and Pueblo. The railroad company cut the time to where nobody could make it. One engineer after another took out the train and fell down. The officials were in despair. Sam, being a daredevil, was still talking too much for his own good. He began boasting that he could put the fast freight over the road on time. His boasts came to the ears of the officials. The master mechanic called Sam into his office, gave him a good cigar, and purred:

"Montgomery, I understand you claim that you can make running time with our fast freight?"

"You bet I can," nodded Sam.

"Great!" said the master mechanic. "I'll have you called to take it out tomorrow."

When tomorrow rolled around, Sam climbed into the cab. Several officials gathered to watch the run. They could scarcely believe it as operator after operator O'Ked the fast freight through their stations right on her schedule. Her arrival in Pueblo was a triumph for the Santa Fe, and this triumph was duplicated on the return trip to Denver.

At Denver a welcoming committee met Sam, lavished praise on him, and shook his hand. The superintendent ended with: "The run is yours from now on, Montgomery! We're all proud of you."

"Just a minute," grinned Sam with a wave of his throttle hand. "You ain't wishin' that job off on to me. I quit when I stopped my train in Denver a few minutes ago."

"You're crazy," said the superintendent.

"You're right. I'd never have made runnin' time for you yesterday, an' again today, if I wasn't as nutty as a squirrel, but I told you I'd do it. I did it. Now I'm resignin' my job here."

Sam Montgomery quit the Santa Fe with official protests ringing in his ears. He drifted down to Old Mexico, which was a boomers' paradise, and died of smallpox in a pesthouse several months later.

CHAPTER XIV

FLORENCE AND CRIPPLE CREEK

As I mentioned in the first chapter, my uncle Carl Lathrop became quite a boomer. I barely remembered him, but through my father I learned that one day back in the 1890's he suddenly quit his job of running an engine over Marshall Pass on the D. & R. G. and started his lifelong quest for that greener pasture.

Uncle Carl was living in San Jose when I finally contacted him back in 1941. The years had not impaired his memory.

During my many visits with him I learned how he had run a locomotive over Marshall Pass, when trainload after trainload of hewn granite had been moved from quarries in Gunnison County to Denver for the state capitol building, then under construction. With the last trainload, business had taken a nose dive. When the board was cut, Carl was the youngest engineer holding a regular job.

The story follows, as written in manuscript.

"There'll be another cut soon," the master mechanic had predicted gloomily. So Carl packed his

suitcase and drifted to the Florence and Cripple Creek. The time was April, 1895.

He went to the office of Mr. Collins, superintendent of the F. & C.C., and laid his service record from the D. & R.G. on the official's desk. "Are you hiring any engineers?" Carl asked him.

Mr. Collins plucked at his whiskers while he read Carl's letter. In the end he nodded with satisfaction.

"Any engineer who's handled trains over Marshall Pass," he said, "could run on any man's railroad. You're hired, Lathrop. I want you to learn the track by going up to Cripple Creek on Number 1 this afternoon. Ride a coach. You'll probably handle a train out of there before night."

Learn the track from the window of a day coach! That was a new one on Carl, but he was willing if the superintendent was. He rode the cushions over the forty-mile main line, laid with sixty-pound rails on hand-hewn red-spruce ties.

Before boarding the train at Florence, Carl had walked along the side of the train on an inspection tour. There were five red-enameled coaches, each with the picturesque D. & R.G. emblem in gold paint. But the Mogul on the head end, the Two-Spot, had painted on her tender the full name of the F. & C.C. She was a neat locomotive, the Number 2, weighing, he judged, almost forty tons. He was favorably impressed with her clean, well-kept appearance, and discovered later that the F. & C.C. maintained all six of their engines in almost perfect mechanical condition. Their railroad, also, was a credit to the company, as was evidenced by the way the train rode.

The first part of the trip was over a reasonably level and fairly straight ten-mile stretch. They made a short halt where the F. & C.C. crossed the Santa Fe. Carl divided his time between studying the mountainous terrain and sizing up the welter of swaying, chatting passengers who occupied every seat and jammed the aisle. There were frock-coated gamblers in high silk hats, quiet men in business garb, hard-rock miners in dungarees and dark-colored work shirts, conservatively dressed women fussing over restless children, and painted ladies without children who flaunted colored slippers, massive hats with ostrich plumes, and the slightly sickening odors of various perfumes.

The rattling exhausts of the engine slowed to labored beats as they dove into a slender, high-walled canyon. Winding and looping through this gorge was the dry bed of Eight-Mile Creek, upon which was laid the main line. Carl could see signs of where a flood had raged down in the not-distant past.

A smiling runt of a conductor edged through the barely navigable aisle and paused beside Carl's seat. "I'm Mickey Mahoney," introduced the conductor, thrusting out his right hand. "You're Carl Lathrop, ain't you?"

"That's right," agreed Carl. "But how did you know me?"

"I was told that you're gonna run an engine on this pike." Mickey chuckled. "How do you like it as far as you've gone?" he asked.

"I was wondering about the wisdom of laying track right in the creek bed along here," said Carl.

"Oh, that?" grinned Mickey. "Soon as the frost

goes out of the ground this spring the F. & C.C. is gonna build a high line which will lift the rails above all danger of future floods."

By this time they had slowed to about six miles an hour, and Carl asked:

"Is the grade this heavy all the way to Cripple Creek?"

"It is," replied Mickey. "It's practically all 4 per cent. Mostly crooked, too."

They halted at Victor while a number of the passengers unloaded. A short distance farther was Cripple Creek, end of the run. Both towns were roaring hives of industry, filled with dance-hall girls, solid merchants and their families, tinhorn gamblers and speculators—a heterogenous mass of humanity lifted from the four corners of the land by the proximity of mountains of shining gold.

Carl knew fortunes were being dug from the surrounding hills, but his preference for earning a living was on the iron pike. The F. & C.C. was a little-known railroad, having been projected only two years before when the yellow metal was discovered around Victor and Cripple Creek.

On April 17, 1893, it had dawned upon a group of hardheaded pioneers that they could make more money hauling other men's gold than by prospecting for themselves. Accordingly they obtained a charter to lay track between Cripple Creek and Florence, a distance of forty miles. By July of the next year, the first train made its triumphal journey over the new line. So the road Carl had just traveled over was a mere baby of ten months. At that time the F. & C.C. owned only six locomotives and two cabooses, leasing

the balance of its rolling stock from the Denver and Rio Grande.

Bennett Avenue was the main thoroughfare in Cripple Creek. It extended from the depot to the eastern edge of town. At 2:00 P. M. every day both ends of this avenue were roped off so horses and wagons could not move through. The avenue was solidly packed with people all the rest of the afternoon and most of the night.

Three regular passenger trains were operated each way every day between Cripple Creek and Florence. The railroad shops and general offices were located in Florence. Each night at eight o'clock a "sleeper" train pulled out of Cripple Creek, bound for Florence, where the D. & R.G. picked it up and took it east. Needless to say, every berth was at a premium on these fancy strings of varnish.

Narrow-gauge Pullmans were quite luxurious. Three shiny brass oil lamps were suspended from the ceiling. Baker heaters kept them warm in the coldest weather. These heaters burned anthracite coal and were water circulators, with water pipes extending down each side of the car. There were upper and lower berths, ten on a side. But they were so slender that only one person could be comfortably accommodated in each. Uniformed Negro porters were in attendance.

Each sleeper train had one "buffet sleeper." These were similar to the modern compartment Pullman, having only fifteen berths while a tiny kitchen supplied buffet lunches to hungry passengers.

About 6:30 P.M. the caller ordered Carl to handle the locomotive on the sleeper train! His only knowl-

edge of the road was what he had learned from riding a day coach over its length. Now he was called to run their crack train on his first trip!

His engine was the One-Spot. She had an automatic air valve. The coaches behind her were equipped with automatic air brakes. But straight air was still being used, even on the passenger trains. All freight cars were still equipped with straight air.

The F. & C.C. engineers claimed that automatic air was not safe! They used that as an alibi because they hadn't progressed with the times.

Carl made an uneventful first run to Florence, where they connected with D. & R.G. Number 1. All the coaches were narrow gauge, but a standard-gauge engine handled them, the track being laid with a third rail to Denver. The Rio Grande had standard-gauged their main line from Denver to Salt Lake, via Tennessee Pass, in 1890, leaving the original narrow-gauge main line via Marshall Pass and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison a mere connecting link.

In Florence Carl was told that he would handle Number 7, the night sleeper, regularly. This meant a long layover in Cripple Creek. When he got back to that roaring gold camp he went room hunting. Apparently there was only one vacant room for rent in the whole town. A hatchet-faced landlady showed it to him. In a bare attic, upright two-by-fours had had boards nailed about them to form a shallow box. In this box was a two-inch-thick mattress. There was no chair, no dresser, not even a lamp. A cat could have been thrown through the cracks in the outside walls.

"How much?" Carl asked the landlady.

"Sixty-five dollars a month," she said firmly.

"What?" he yelped.

"A room with a bed and dresser rents for a hundred dollars a month," she snapped.

Carl left in disgust. He went over to the depot and wired Superintendent Collins, explaining that he could not find a room.

Back came a reply, "Use the sleepers." This he did, all the time he was on that run, at no cost.

Several weeks after Carl went to work on the F & C.C. the company received six more engines from Baldwin. In addition they had borrowed half a dozen from the Rio Grande. The F. & C.C. was in the money. Empty cars were a novelty. Cars into Victor or Cripple Creek came loaded with lumber, machinery, coal, and merchandise. They left those points loaded with ore. Revenue trains operated both ways over the line.

The road immediately serviced the new engines. The Seven-Spot was tuned up and the roundhouse foreman ran her toward the main line. He moved her too far, so her pilot and cylinders did not clear the room. Carl was switching that day, running the One-Spot, shoving a dozen cars ahead of his engine. The track curved to the left, shutting off his view. Suddenly they stopped with a jolt. Carl crossed the runway and looked ahead. The foreman was running toward the Seven-Spot. Carl jumped off and did likewise.

The head car had caught the right cylinder on the brand new Baldwin and torn it completely off! Carl returned to his engine and dragged the cars back so

the damaged Seven-Spot could be moved out of the way.

That afternoon the trainmaster called Carl to his office. "Lathrop," he scowled, when the engineer entered, "I'm going to give you ten days vacation without pay for tearing up that new engine."

"No, you're not." Carl flung back hotheadedly. "You ain't going to give me ten days, nor one day, nor one minute! The roundhouse foreman was to blame for leaving her where she didn't clear. Do you wire for my time, or do I go on working here?"

Engineers were at a premium. Carl went on working.

In 1897 the F. & C.C. leased the Golden Circle Railroad. This was another three-foot-gauge gold carrier. It linked Victor with Goldfield, a distance of 1.7 miles. Later it was extended to Isabella, making a total length of six and a half miles.

The Florence and Cripple Creek prospered from the beginning, due to the kind of merchandise it hauled. By 1898 the company owned twelve locomotives, eleven passenger cars, two baggage cars, and four cabooses. However, they continued the original policy of renting freight equipment from the Rio Grande. In fact, they often had to borrow extra engines and passenger coaches during rush seasons.

As an example of how well the line was doing, in the year ending June 30, 1897, they hauled 208,411 tons of revenue freight, earning $218,926 over and above operating expenses, interest, and taxes.

A group of Eastern capitalists had been hungrily viewing the potentialities of the small ore-carrying

pikes of Colorado. On November 18, 1899, they formed the Denver and Southwestern Railway Company, which took over control of the F. & C.C. and the Golden Circle, as well as the Canon City and Cripple Creek, the Midland Terminal, and three lesser lines of the region.

Inasmuch as the D. & S.W. was only a holding company, the individual roads which the corporation managed did not lose their identities. The name "Florence & Cripple Creek" was still emblazoned on all the F. & C.C.'s rolling stock and locomotives. On September 30, 1904, after some financial juggling, the D. & S.W. emerged as the Cripple Creek Central Railway, still comprising the same common carriers. The backers evidently cared only for money, and sought for glory, so the several roads retained their identities.

By this time the F. & C.C. had relocated some of its main line in order to mitigate the danger of washouts in case of flood. Sixty-pound steel had been laid throughout. In addition, 16.3 miles of spur and branch lines had been built, giving the road a total mileage of fifty-five and one-half miles.

In 1911 the parent company, the Cripple Creek Central, decided to expand. As a result, the F. & C.C. took over, by lease, a seventy-four-mile standard-gauge pike, the Colorado Springs & Cripple Creek District Railway. This line, stretching between Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek, boasted forty-six and a half miles of main line, with twenty-seven and a half miles devoted to spurs and branches, which brought the F. & C.C. length up to one hundred and twenty nine and one-half miles.

The following year was the beginning of the end for the romantic little road. In July, 1912, a severe flood coursed down the canyon of Eight-Mile Creek, wiping out over thirty-three miles of the main line between Wilbur and Ora Junta. Its kindred pike, the Canon City and Cripple Creek, between Canon City and Ora Junta, was washed off the map.

The gold mining was not all that it had been before the turn of the century. When the board of directors went into a huddle they emerged with the decision that rebuilding the southern section of the F. & C.C. would not be worth the expense. They said it would not even pay to operate the undamaged part of the road between Wilbur and Florence. Therefore, on May 8, 1914, all of the F. & C.C. line south of Wilbur was abandoned, as was the entire length of C.C. & C.C.

The drastic action just about killed the F. & C.C. Such a foreshortened railroad could not hope for much business. The last spark of life was extinguished on April 30, 1915, when the F. & C.C. was dissolved and its remaining line from Wilbur to Cripple Creek was abandoned. The F. & C.C.'s lease on the Golden Circle expired that same day, and all equipment was sold to the latter.

The Golden Circle then changed its name to Cripple Creek & Colorado Springs Railroad, and took over the F. &. C.C.'s old lease on the Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek District. The new C.C. & C.S. then shut down that part of the old F. & C.C. track between Victor and Cripple Creek, and changed the remaining five miles from Victor over to standard gauge.

On July 15, 1919, the C.C. & C.S. relinquished its hold on the C.S. & C.C.D. and the latter was discontinued altogether on September 1, 1920. After this, the Midland Terminal Railway purchased the remaining mileage of the C.C. & C.S., which was none other than the five miles of standard-gauge track out of Victor—lineal descendant of the old D & C.C. narrow-gauge pike.

How many old-timers remember Mr. Frasier, the Westinghouse expert on automatic air, who circulated over the Western railroads, explaining the use and the operation of the new and safer type brakes when they were installed?

Mr. Frasier was a brilliant man. He had a paunch which, when he seated himself, covered his legs and rested on them. He had been instructing engineers about using automatic air brakes on the D. & R.G. standard gauge.

One day he dropped into Cripple Creek. Carl's engine was coupled on Number 7, the night sleeper train, and ready to leave town. Superintendent Collins, accompanied by Mr. Frasier, came over to Carl's engine. Catching Carl's eye when Mr. Frasier's attention was elsewhere, Mr. Collins winked warningly. Then he said:

"You'll want to use the automatic air as usual tonight, won't you, Lathrop?"

Carl caught on. Mr. Collins was trying to make Frasier think they used automatic air on their passenger trains all the time. The fact was that no passenger train had as yet gone down the hill by the new type of air brakes, for reasons already stated.

"Sure," Carl nonchalantly agreed.

If Mr. Collins had any doubt about Carl's ability to handle the automatic air instead of the straight, he did not show it. The way the F. & C.C. engineers made it possible to operate automatic air brakes as though they were straight air was simple enough. Beneath the engine cabs were preliminary valves for use with automatic air. By disconnecting a pipe and plugging it with a wooden plug, the automatic air valve would operate as straight air.

The preliminary valve on Carl's engine was plugged, but Mr. Frasier apparently had not noticed it. Carl knew he must divert the attention of the air expert elsewhere while he unplugged the valve. A couple of air inspectors came to the rescue. While Mr. Frasier went back to talk to them, Carl hurriedly unplugged the preliminary valve.

So Carl had the honor of letting the first passenger train down the heavy grade with automatic air. The next time he saw Mr. Frasier, the expert cornered him.

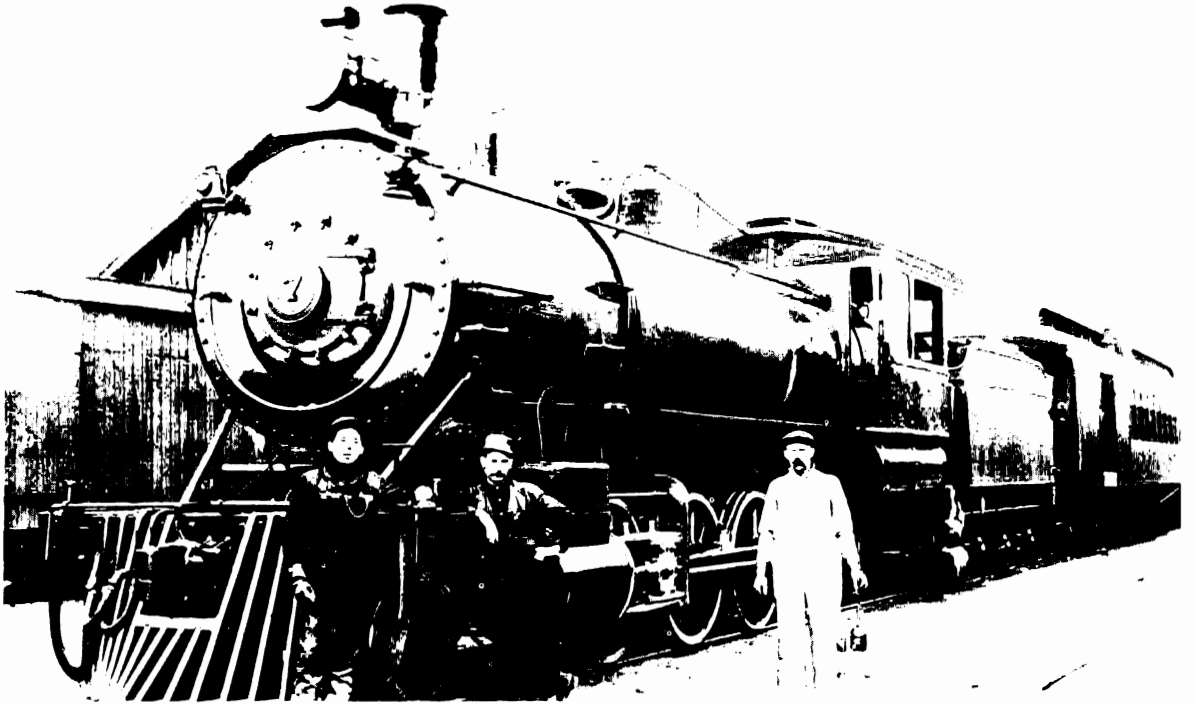
"You think you pulled a fast one on me the other night, don't you?" he smiled.

Carl started to deny.

"Listen, Lathrop," he went on, "I saw you unplug your preliminary valve. I also watched you let eighteen loads of ore from Leadville to Malta one day just after the D. & R.G. standard-gauged, and while you were running one of their engines. Your train used automatic air that day. Remember?"

Carl nodded, but kept his mouth shut.

An energetic little engineer named Pope had been given the Seven-Spot after she was repaired. He held



Courtesy Railroad Magazine

ENGINE NO. 7, FLORENCE & CRIPPLE CREEK

Probably taken in Cripple Creek in the early 1900's. Crew unknown.

one of the passenger runs. After Carl's passenger trip with automatic air, all the runners grudgingly used it. Pope was quite an expert when he finally got the hang of it.

One morning in Cripple Creek Carl was called to take Pope's engine and do some mine switching with her. Using freight cars which were still straight air necessitated Carl's plugging the preliminary valve. When they finished switching Carl put the Seven-Spot away, completely forgetting to unplug the valve.

Later that day Pope went on his usual passenger run. He knew nothing about the plug, but managed to get down the mountain without trouble. When he came to the Santa Fe crossover he sailed past the stop signal. Even then he did not tumble that anything was wrong. At Cyanide, the next station, he whizzed past another stop signal. Suspicious by this time, Pope climbed down and discovered the plug in his preliminary valve. Muttering to himself, because he knew Carl had used his engine that morning, he removed the plug and went into Florence.

Later Carl met him on the street. "Hello, Pope," greeted Carl.

Pope snubbed the other man so pointedly that his quick temper flared red hot. Carl grabbed his arm. "Listen, Pope," he barked. "If you've got a grievance with me, you'd better get it off your chest."

"I've got a grievance," said Pope, "and you know what it is."

"I don't. Let's have it."

"How about plugging my preliminary valve today

while you used my engine, so I ran every stop signal comin' down?" demanded Pope. "You thought you'd get my job!"

It took Carl about ten seconds to explain why he'd plugged the valve. In the end Pope thrust out his right hand. "I'm a fool," he apologized. "Shake, then I'll buy you a beer."

One morning in May, 1896, Carl was in Florence waiting to get out on Number 1. About 10:00 A. M. somebody called his attention to a black pall which hung across the western sky. It seemed to be above Cripple Creek and resembled a thunderhead. The pall spread until it mushroomed across half the sky. When he was called for his run he was told, "Cripple Creek is on fire!"

The black pall was smoke. Carl knew the fire must be serious. Promptly at 1:00 P. M. he moved his train away from the depot and rattled toward the mouth of the canyon. By this time the smoke had diminished and he thought the fire had been brought under control.

When he halted at Victor, four miles from Cripple Creek, he learned the full details. The famous gold-mine town of Cripple Creek had burned to the ground! Not a building was left standing.

A scene of utter desolation met his eyes when Carl pulled into the remains of Cripple Creek. Charred ruins were everywhere, with lazy smoke trailing upward. Across the tracks, where had stood a trim little home, sat a young woman clutching tightly to her breast a crying baby. She rested in a partly burned rocking chair.

"Don't you think you'd better get away from here?" Carl asked as he stepped up to her.

She shook her head. "My husband is working underground and doesn't know about the fire," she said, and tears rolled down her cheeks. "This rocking chair is all I saved. I must tell him of our loss."

Crowds along the track were so thick one could not squeeze through. The operator crawled over the roof of the train and called down to Carl:

"You're to start hauling all these homeless folks down to Victor. Don't wait to turn your engine, but shuttle back and forth as fast as you can."

When the throng heard that, they jammed the coaches. In a few seconds there was scarcely a foot of the engine that didn't have a man or woman hanging to it. Orders were strict about not carrying passengers on the engines. Mr. Collins came up.

"What do you want me to do about that?" Carl asked him, and pointed to those covering his locomotive.

"Take them, Lathrop," he said. "Get them out of here. They must eat. They must find places to sleep."

Until midnight he shuttled back and forth between Cripple Creek and Victor. Victor was filled with humanity. Thousands were unable to find a place to eat or sleep. It was decided to take the overflow to Florence.

Again the coaches were jammed sardine tight. Carl was just reaching for his whistle cord when out of the darkness panted a well-dressed, heavy-set man.

"Just a second, engineer!" he shouted. "I must get to Florence where I can catch a train east."

"You'll have to ride the coaches," Carl told him.

"There isn't standing room there. Let me on your engine, please," he begged.

"Okay," Carl agreed. "Get up here on my side and stand in front of me."

On their way down, the stranger told Carl his name was Stratton. He said he had lost $50,000 worth of stock in the fire. But it would be replaced. He claimed that he had picked up the $50,000 dabbling in gold mines.

"If you've got a hundred dollars," he invited, "I'll guarantee to increase it to ten thousand in six months."

Carl was skeptical. The man explained what mining stock he intended playing. Later Carl watched that stock. He would have made *more* than Mr. Stratton guaranteed!

But that was nothing. The Ancora-Leland Mine was sinking a shaft and selling stock at ten cents per share. The Gold King was doing likewise, their stock worth fifteen cents. Carl was given a tip that the two stocks were going to skyrocket. He did not speculate. Within two months stock in both mines was worth $1,500 a share!

Winfield Scott Stratton! Today a statue of that colorful mining man stands on one of the main intersections in Colorado Springs. A street is named for him, also a park, and a book has been written about him by Frank Waters.

Shortly after the great fire, Carl was called to take his engine and a caboose and go to Victor and pick up a "Circle M" boxcar loaded with ore. There

Circle M cars belonged to the D. & R.G. They were new, and of 40,000 pounds capacity. His orders instructed that if he wished he could fill on other loads, but to be sure and bring out the Circle M.

When he backed against the car in Victor it was not yet loaded. Several wagons waited to complete the job. Carl went back and climbed on the hub of the head wagon to get an ore sample. A rugged old fellow, crudely dressed, saw him and came over.

"What are you huntin' for?" he asked. Carl could not place him, although he was sure he had seen him before.

"A good ore specimen," he replied.

"There ain't any good ones in that load," grunted the man. "I'll get you a good one.

He climbed into the boxcar, but returned shortly. He handed Carl a small piece of rock which looked as if it had been dipped in quicksilver. The piece was U shaped.

"Take this," said the man, "and roast it. You'll get a right nice watch charm."

Carl thanked him, climbed into the gangway of the engine, and reached for an iron-handled scoop shovel. Placing the ore sample on the blade, he shoved it into the firebox and cracked the blower. He let the ore roast about thirty minutes, then he pulled it out to cool. When it was ready he saw a blob of pure yellow gold which had boiled from the U-shaped rock. He stuck the nugget in his pocket.

Because several cars always held better than a single one on heavy grades, they picked up six more loads. In Florence they shoved the six loads on a side track. But the Circle M car was taken to the D. &

R.G. depot. When they stopped, five burly men armed with Winchester rifles unloaded and five more guards took their places. The car contained ten tons of ore.

After the ore had been assayed it paid $196,000 a ton. The shipment belonged to Mr. Stratton, and it was he who had given Carl the sample.

A few years later Carl was running an engine on the Mobile & Ohio. He showed the gold nugget to a banker in Murphysboro one day. The banker wanted to buy it.

"There must be fifty dollars' worth of gold in this nugget," Carl argued.

The banker shoved a fifty-dollar bill through the wicket. "I'll buy it," he said instantly.

Meanwhile Cripple Creek was rebuilding after the fire. The F. & C.C. leased twenty-two narrow gauge engines from the D. & R.G. to handle the increased business. The forty-mile railroad worked thirty-three regular engine crews during the next several months. Did any other short line ever work that many crews? The F. & C.C. was then constructing the high line, which added to the confusion.

This little madhouse was enough to put gray hairs in any man's head. When Carl began getting lap orders, one right after another, it did not help his disposition. A new dispatcher had come to Florence from a four-track Eastern road, where about all the dispatching necessary was the issuing of clearances.

Carl's first lap order was given to him at Victor. The order directed him to meet a brass hat's special

at a little station called McCourt. Along the F. & C.C. were several telegraph offices where trains must stop and get clearances before proceeding. Carl rolled into Adalaide, next station above McCourt, and went after his clearance.

"Any dope on the brass hat's special?" he asked the operator.

"Nope," replied the op.

Carl climbed on his engine and started for McCourt. Soon he rounded a rocky point where he could see one of two tunnels a short distance below. Heavy smoke rolled out of the first tunnel. Carl knew a train was coming toward him. He halted.

Figuring he had misread his orders, Carl backed to Adalaide and took the siding. But he hadn't misread them. He had a positive meet with the special at McCourt. When the special batted up the main track flagged them.

"Didn't you have a meet with me at McCourt?" he asked the engineer.

"I ain't got anything on you at all," the engineer growled, handing Carl his running orders.

He was right. Carl asked him for his orders and when given them, shoved them into his pocket. At first he planned to call the dispatcher on the lap order when he reached Florence, but later he decided to overlook it.

About ten days later Carl was given a positive meet with Number 1 at Adalaide. When he left Vista, next station above Adalaide, he realized he was on Number 1's time, but he figured they were running late. Carl hadn't gone two miles when he saw smoke in the canyon below. *It was west of Adalaide!*

Carl waited until he was sure it was Number 1. Then he backed to Vista and flagged them, as he had the brass hat's special. They had nothing on him. He collected their orders and filed them along with the first lap order.

By then Carl was just about fed up with this kind of railroading. But as he had done before, he cooled off before he reached Florence, and he again forgot the incident.

A month or so later, in Cripple Creek, Carl was given orders to run light down to the little station at the mouth of the canyon, turn, and then help a work train which he would meet there back to Cripple Creek.

He dropped down the 4 per cent grade. Vista, Adalaide, McCourt .... The next station was at the mouth of the canyon where he would meet the work train. Just below McCourt he saw smoke fogging the canyon walls ahead. He stopped. Pretty soon the work train came into sight, dragging about five cars. They staged a "cornfield meet" that time, because Carl was mad all over. The work train had no orders to meet him anywhere.

Carl decided it was high time to stop this damn foolishness. He backed to McCourt, let the work train pass, then flagged to Florence.

Carrying the latest lap order in his pocket, Carl stopped his engine alongside the F. & C.C. general offices, unloaded, and entered. His dark-brown eyes were flashing fire and his husky six-foot-two body looked dangerous. He walked toward the dispatcher, fingering his three sets of lap orders.

"Listen," he told the dispatcher, "I'm calling for

a showdown. In the past couple of months you've given me three different lap orders. Only by the grace of God did I avoid having a head-end collision any one of the times."

"You're a damned liar!" the dispatcher flung in Carl's face, without attempting to check on his statements.

In one jump Carl was across the office. The dispatcher picked up a chair and swung it at him. Carl jerked it from his hands and clipped him alongside the jaw. The dispatcher went to sleep with a table upside-down on him.

Meanwhile, the trainmaster, a one-armed man, grabbed another chair and made a pass at Carl with it. Carl yanked it from him and the trainmaster started through the office with Carl hot on his heels.

In the office of the chief clerk, the trainmaster was a couple of jumps ahead of Carl, who tipped a desk across his path. He tumbled over it and Carl grabbed him.

"I'm not going to hit you," Carl told him, "because you're crippled. But I'm gonna twist your nose until you howl for mercy."

Carl grabbed his proboscis. He yelped like a good fellow. A chief clerk, and O'Conner, the chief dispatcher, came to his rescue and the fight was over.

Carl had wrecked the offices pretty thoroughly. O'Conner gradually cooled him down by some fast talking. Carl showed him the three lap orders. About that time a clerk came out and told Carl the assistant superintendent wanted him in his office.

Everybody around there must have thought Carl was bad medicine. He found the assistant super

perched on a high stool behind a desk that was elevated on a little balcony. Carl could not get to him without a ladder.

"What do you mean, Lathrop?" he demanded severely, "coming into these offices and wrecking them as you did?"

Carl told him about the lap orders.

"Have you got them with you?" asked the official.

"Right here in my pocket," replied Carl.

"Can I see them?"

"Sure. Here they are." Carl held them out. The official came down from his perch and examined them.

"You go back to your engine," he said at length. "I'll put a stop to this kind of railroading."

One day a brakeman named Lund applied a hand brake so vigorously on a loaded boxcar that the chain broke and the car started rolling down the 4 per cent grade. Helpless to slow it down, the brakeman jumped off the car. The conductor of the crew, whose name was Blondy, jumped on a switch engine and set off to capture the runaway. A suburban train was due to leave Anaconda any minute, and the loaded car was heading toward it at increasing speed. While the switch engine chased the car, Blondy scrawled a note on a scrap of paper and wrapped it around a chunk of coal. When they passed Eclipse, he hurled the chunk of coal through the station window.

The operator, figuring some kids were playing pranks as usual, jumped from his desk to pursue them. Just in time he noticed the piece of paper tied to the coal. He deciphered Blondy's hasty scrawl in time

to throw the board in the face of the passenger train before it pulled out of Anaconda.

The chase after the runaway car continued, engine careening over the serpentine track at full speed. The conductor finally caught up with the car just before it entered Anaconda. He made the coupling from the pilot. The switch engineer set his brakes and halted the car with only seconds to spare.

Army worms visited the F. & C.C. that summer. Army worms are worse than locusts when it comes to ravaging a country. The first Carl knew about them was the day he jogged along the crooked canyon on Number 1. Suddenly his drivers began to spin. He shut off, yanked his sander lever a few times, and was about to open the throttle again when the most horrible stench he had ever smelled flooded the cab.

He gagged, let his train roll back, and jumped off to learn the cause of the trouble. The track for a hundred yards ahead was a moving mass of army worms, inches deep over the rails!

By sweeping the insects off the rails, the train managed to get past. For almost a month every train going up the hill was stalled by them. Countless millions must have traveled across the mountains. They left a brown swath behind, even stripping all leaves from the aspen trees.

In August of that year the F. & C.C. had the big flood. Strangely enough, it happened the same day the high line was finally opened for traffic. Carl handled the first passenger train over the new stretch of track.

That day, when he came to the little station at the mouth of the canyon, raindrops as big as walnuts

were spattering down from a leaden sky. A water tank stood there, but they used it no more than necessary, because the water was full of alkali. Carl had a hunch and made his fireman fill the tender.

By the time they passed McCourt, rain was roaring down in sheets. A short distance from McCourt his engine nosed around a sharp curve. On the track were half a dozen bucket-sized rocks. He stopped.

Mickey Mahoney, his conductor—the same one he had ridden with on his first trip over the line dropped off, clad in a slicker, and removed the rocks. Farther on were two deep cuts. The first was clear. Carl blasted through it and crossed the short fill the other side. The track through the second cut was littered with rocks and mud. He rolled up to it and halted. Poking his head out the cab window, he looked back. The rear coach was still sitting in the cut behind.

Carl dropped his reverse lever in the corner and yanked open the throttle. They lunged forward. He put the pilot on his engine as deeply as possible into the rock and mud ahead. Halted again, he looked back. The whole side of the cut was coming down. The edge of the slide caught the rear steps of the last coach and tore them off. Had they not moved ahead, the coach would have been caught dead center with possible injury to the passengers.

About seventy-five feet below them in the canyon bottom, a crew of men was moving the telegraph line out of the crooked bed. By now, they were all huddled under boulders and trees for protection against the downpour.

Carl heard an ominous roar, like the sound of a

strong wind through the trees, and listened again. Reaching overhead, he yanked several sharp, warning blasts from his whistle. The men in the bottom looked up. Carl leaned half out of his cab window and gestured with both arms for them to climb the sides of the canyon. Then he pointed above. They got his warning.

The men were not an instant too soon. A wall of brown, rock-filled water fully twenty feet high roared into view, carrying timbers and trees on its gnashing crest. The first wall subsided to be quickly followed by a smaller one.

One of the two tunnels was a mile below. The floor of it was about ten feet above the creek bed. The cloudburst went through the tunnel and filled it to within a foot of the roof!

About 9:00 P. M., a crew of men found the stalled passenger train. They cleared the rubble out of the cut so the train could proceed. The track rounded a high point half a mile beyond the cut, then crossed a long, wooden trestle with high fills on either side. Before they came to the high point, the crew foreman said:

"Don't go around that high point till we cut your engine off and see if the track will hold her up. The flood undermined the point; we cribbed it up with ties."

But the track held up the engine. Carl returned and dragged his train over. Before he crossed the wooden trestle, the foreman wanted to look it over. Carl stopped on the fill, and while the train was waiting there the fill settled over two feet beneath their weight.

They pulled into Cripple Creek about 8:00 A. M. Carl was notified that the railroad would be tied up for about fifteen days while the flood damage was being repaired. He could return to Florence, via the Colorado Midland and the D. & R.G., or he could remain in Cripple Creek and draw full pay.

That fall the town of Cripple Creek was finally rebuilt from the big fire. Twenty-two engines were returned to the D. & R.G.; twenty-two engineers and their firemen were cut off. Carl still had a job. Superintendent Collins asked him to stay. But his feet were itching again and, boomerlike, he figured it was time to quit the F. & C.C.

CHAPTER XV

MIDLAND MEMORIES

ALTHOUGH Uncle Carl was crowding eighty years of age, he was remarkably well preserved. He read without glasses and his hearing was perfect. During one of my visits—I had brought him a pound can of smoking tobacco because he loved to roll his own brown-paper cigarettes—he mentioned the fact that he had run a locomotive on the now abandoned Colorado Midland Railway.

"Why not write down your experiences while you worked there, Carl?" I asked him.

His face wreathed in a big smile. "That might give me something to keep me from getting so doggoned lonesome, Gilbert," he said. "I'll begin it this evening."

A couple of months later Uncle Carl Lathrop handed me a bundle of hand-written manuscript. Fortunately I was able to decipher his rather shaky scrawl. The following is the story of his days as a boomer engineer on the long since abandoned Colorado Midland, told in his own words.

Uncle Carl Lathrop died in 1948.

In my mind's eye I can see a ghostly army of railroaders massing on the far side of the Great Divide—boys with Colorado Midland service letters—throttle artists, happy-go-lucky firemen and brakemen, gray-headed conductors, boomer switchmen, gandy dancers, shopmen, dispatchers, and telegraph operators. Some were companions of my youth. I think I hear the Paymaster of the Universe calling the long roll.

In December, 1899, I was running an engine on the Mobile & Ohio. I had drifted over to that railroad after quitting the Florence and Cripple Creek. For the time being I was fed up with mountain railroading, its blizzards and deep snows, its cloudbursts and runaways. I aimed to stay down in the low country where Mother Nature was a bit kindlier. Then one night, on pulling in from a run, I picked up a registered letter at the post office in Murphysboro, Illinois.

Printed on the upper left corner of the envelope were the words: "Return to Colorado Midland Railway, Supt. of Motive Power, Colorado Springs, Colorado." Who the devil would be writing me from there? I asked myself as I tore open the envelope. I soon had the answer. A. L. Humphrey, the Motive Power Chief, invited me out to Colorado to run an engine on the Midland. He enclosed an application blank, "so you can immediately assume your duties on arrival, without formalities," and offered me free transportation from Murphysboro to Colorado Springs. He said he was familiar with my experience running engines on the D. & R.G. over Marshall Pass, and later on the Cripple Creek line, because of which

he was sure I would have no trouble with the Midland's heavy grades.

Those were the days when an experienced railroad man didn't have to hunt for a job; the job hunted for him. I was doing well on the Mobile & Ohio. I had a regular passenger engine, the respect of the officials, and an excellent reputation as a runner. But you know how a young fellow is. At thirty-three I found the whole world beckoning. So I wired Mr. Humphrey that I'd be glad to take a whirl at running his engines. I had heard that they were fine locomotives, well kept mechanically, and that the C.M. track, although crooked as a dog's hind leg, was in good shape.

The waning of the nineteenth century found me deadheading from Colorado Springs to the C.M. terminal of Basalt. The Midland operated passenger equipment equal to that of any standard-gauge line in the country. The coach in which I rode seated about fifty-five persons. It was elegantly finished and furnished with mahogany and oak panels, bronze trimmings, four massive gas lamps, highbacked mahogany seats upholstered in maroon and old-gold plush, lavishly decorated ceilings, and little embossed glass windows in the clerestory. It had a smoking compartment, done in mahogany and boasting a large plate-glass mirror, and two salons with marble washstands and tin basins.

Included in the train were a dining car, a couple of Pullmans, a smoker, and mail and baggage coaches. I figured such comfort was worth working for.

Our train was well filled with holiday travelers. The morning was brilliant with sunshine which daz-

zled the snow-clad sides of Pikes Peak as the two McQueen ten-wheelers which were to haul us on the first leg of our journey blasted off. The train started with hardly a jolt; those Midland engineers were throttle artists.

Up through the town of Manitou, and on toward Divide we sped, howling through several tunnels and grinding around curves where the sides of the coaches hung over several-hundred-foot drops to the brawling ice-clad torrent below. While we're traversing this picturesque canyon let us take a look at the history of the Colorado Midland.

Until 1886 no standard-gauge railroad tapped the rich deposits of gold, silver, coal, and timber in the Colorado Rockies. There were two thirty-six-inch-gauge lines, the D. & R.G. and the Denver, South Park and Pacific, known as the South Park. These two lines converged in Denver, leaving a rough triangle of wealth-filled mountains which had no rail service whatever. The Denver, Texas & Gulf offered a southern connection, while the D. & R.G. afforded an eastern outlet for freight and passengers from this unserved triangle at Colorado Springs. With an eye eventually to extending as far as Ogden, Utah, and perhaps even to the Pacific coast, a line was projected westward from Colorado Springs to the town of Manitou, then up Ute Pass to Divide on a fairly easy grade, and down to the valley of the Arkansas River. It would extend westward to Arkansas Junction, where a short branch would serve the rough mining town of Leadville, about 135 miles from Colorado Springs.

Eighteen miles from Leadville the proposed railroad would cross Saguache Pass by a long tunnel. After emerging from the tunnel the line would drop down Frying Pan Creek to Roaring Forks Creek, and on to Glenwood Springs. From the junction of Frying Pan and Roaring Fork creeks an eighteen-mile branch would be built to Aspen, another fabulously rich silver mining camp.

This road was the first standard gauge to pierce the Colorado Rockies. It was incorporated November 21, 1885, as the Colorado Midland Railway Company. But it was not until five years later that trains began running. Meanwhile, by the end of January, 1886, complete surveys had been made from Colorado Springs to Glenwood Springs, including the Aspen branch, and another branch extending to Cardiff, west of Glenwood Springs, to immense coal fields at Hell Creek. Three months later the company had secured enough financial backing to begin building 161 miles of main line from Colorado Springs to Leadville.

The company's first president was J. J. Hagerman. For many years the 2,164-foot bore at Hagerman Pass was known as Hagerman Tunnel and the pass as Hagerman Pass. The tiny station at the east end of the tunnel was named in honor of one of Midland's financial backers, J. R. Busk, of New York City.

In April, 1886, a bid was let for the construction of that part of the road from Leadville to Aspen. This included drilling Hagerman Tunnel through Sugar Loaf Mountain. In July more than a thousand hardy men were making the dirt and granite fly on

the grade from Leadville eastward to Rock Creek, some seventy-six miles.

I was then a young harum-scarum of twenty. I did not witness the construction, but I well remember reading about it in the newspapers and talking it over with cracker-box orators in country stores. Later, when I was working for the Colorado Midland, my interest in the road grew by leaps and bounds, and I began to gather the facts you are now reading.

In the spring of 1886 construction was started at Colorado Springs westward through Colorado City, then to Manitou and into Ute Pass. The grading here was extremely heavy. There were innumerable tunnels and high bridges. Laborers literally blasted out a shelf on the walls of granite and red sandstone. The first tunnel out of Manitou was approached by a 4 per cent grade.

Today this stretch of road can still be seen across the canyon from an improved automobile highway. You should take the drive to realize what those C.M. pioneers accomplished in the way of construction. The original track was laid with sixty-five-pound rails.

By mid-March, 1887, twenty-five miles of track were down from Colorado Springs west, and eighty-five miles graded. This took the line as far as Hill Top, thirty-one miles east of Buena Vista. Over around Leadville dirt was flying in great shape.

Hagerman Tunnel was then about half completed. In case you're interested you can still look at this engineering feat; but you can't go through it, because it is filled with ice all year long! You can also see the remains of the old grade leading to it. You

can view what is left of the great loop which zigzagged along the mountainsides like a discarded forest, with long curved trestles, snowsheds, cuts, and fills.

Hagerman Tunnel was bored through the apex of Hagerache Pass, on the Continental Divide, less than five hundred feet below the very summit. It follows an almost straight course. Leading to it from the east was the piece of track known as the Midland Loop. This loop began at Busk. The west end was a mile and a half east of Ivanhoe, close to the shore of a small, picturesque lake of the same name. Hagerman Tunnel was approximately 11,530 feet above sea level, making it the highest standard-gauge railroad pass in North America.

Because native red spruce crossties were not considered safe enough to hold the rails on the sharp curves, a special grade of oak was imported from Missouri and Indiana. Since some three hundred men in the tracklaying gangs were putting down over a mile of steel a day, six engines were kept busy hauling up supplies.

It began to look as if train service would operate between Colorado Springs and Buena Vista by midsummer of 1887. Since the company owned but three engines and a scant number of freight cars, they placed an order for twenty-five locomotives, thirty-five coaches, and about a thousand freight cars.

The first fifteen locomotives were McQueens, built by Schenectady. All were ten-wheelers, fast, powerful, and trim-lined. Since these engines were designed for heavy passenger service between Colorado Springs and Leadville, around plenty of sixteen-

degree curves, their wheel base had to be extremely short, twelve feet.

Originally the front pair of drivers had no flanges, but by the time I went to work on the Midland they had been flanged. The short wheel base and a stuck set of pony-truck wheels almost ended my railroading days. I'll tell you about it later in this story.

When they were built, these engines were, I think the heaviest of their class ever constructed. They had vacuum steam brakes for the drivers, Westinghouse air brakes on the tenders, and Le Chatelier water brakes for the cylinders. Most of the time those Midland engineers were using all three, and wishing there were a few more!

Baldwin also built a number of ten-wheelers at about the same time. All were highly decorated, with brass and nickel trim. The emblem adopted by the Midland was a triangle superimposed on a circle. The triangle bore along its sides the words, "Pike's Peak Route." Around the circle was lettered "Colorado Midland Railway." Cabs were roomy, with three windows on a side. This brings to mind another episode that happened to me on the Midland. I'll tell you about it later.

On July 13, 1887, the first train from Colorado Springs, on the Midland, chuffed to a halt before the depot in Buena Vista, beginning a period of thirty-one years of continuous operation.

Leadville's first train thrilled the miners, gamblers, saloonkeepers, and dance-hall dames on September 1 of that same year. Before the beginning of 1888, Hagerman Tunnel had been completed and trains were running through to Aspen. So in a matter of

twenty-one months the C.M. had built 238 miles of main line through one of the most rugged sections of the entire Rocky Mountains—a mighty achievement in engineering!

Some world-famous springs are located at Glenwood Springs. These were bought in 1888 by President Hagerman of the Midland. He built a large hotel and an outdoor swimming pool there. Even today, both are nationally known. Originally Hotel Glenwood, it is now called the Colorado Hotel and still draws celebrities from far and wide.

To publicize his new hotel, President Hagerman operated a weekly excursion train every Saturday from Aspen to Glenwood Springs. This was known as the "laundry train," because its passengers, mostly women and children, were intent on a pleasurable evening of swimming in the pool at Glenwood. I think the worst tragedy in the history of that colorful line happened on one of those excursions—as freakish an accident as could be imagined! It occurred several years before I went to work there, but the event was still fresh in the memory of everybody along the railroad.

That Saturday afternoon five humanity-laden coaches comprising the laundry train drifted to a halt at Basalt. Few men were among the passengers, the men being employed largely in the silver mines at Aspen. Because the train would halt but a few minutes in Basalt before completing its run to Glenwood Springs, and because the train crew didn't want any of their charges getting off and being left, all the doors on the coaches were locked before enter-

ing town. This, I might add, was a common practice in those days.

The laundry train halted with a couple of the rear coaches fouling the coal-chute track. Sitting peacefully on the coal-chute track was a helper engine which had just come down the mountain. Her boiler was full of water and she was singing to herself with maximum steam pressure. Nobody was around this helper engine. To this day I doubt if it ever was ascertained why she suddenly decided to move forward.

But move she did, and by the time she smashed into the side of an excursion coach she was rolling at a smart clip. Her nose slewed along, crumpling the wooden sides of the crowded car. When the check valve of her boiler struck, it was broken off, releasing the entire steam and water contents of the boiler. You can imagine what happened when all of this scalding steam and water roared into the coach. I understand that only two or three of those trapped in the inferno came out alive. A young fellow who later fired for me out of Basalt lost a sister in this catastrophe.

By October 20, 1887, trains were running westward from Glenwood Springs to New Castle, paralleling the tracks of the D. & R.G. from Glenwood. After a while arrangements were made with the Rio Grande for joint trackage between New Castle and Grand Junction. Company officials hoped to extend the line westward to Salt Lake City, Utah, and eventually to San Francisco, but it never did get built west of Grand Junction.

Some great races were staged by the westbound

Midland and D. & R.G. trains between Glenwood Springs and New Castle. The first train arriving there was given the block. This created quite a bit of rivalry among the crews of the two pikes.

Now we come again to December, 1899, when I began working on the Colorado Midland. On my way to Basalt that day the snow grew steadily deeper from Leadville west. By the time we reached the station of Busk, which sat at the east end of the second tunnel drilled through the spine of the continent, the snow level was even with the roofs of the coaches. Pulling us were two powerful locomotives blasting defiance to the grade and the snow.

"We got a flanger kicking drifts off the track ahead of us," I heard the conductor remark to a worried passenger.

"How about rotaries?" I asked.

He grinned. "We've got a big one ordered for delivery this year. It is being built by the American Locomotive Company. She'll have a ten-foot cutting wheel and be the last word in snow-fighting equipment. Our present rotary is okay, only her wheel is a little small, nine feet."

Like a startled gopher, our train was swallowed by the snowshed at the east approach to the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel, and we began a journey of about three miles beneath tons of granite, through Stygian darkness.

I'll tell you a little about this Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel. If you're in Colorado during the summer, you can ride through the bore in your family car. It is

now a part of a grand scenic drive which uses the now abandoned Midland right of way most of the distance between Colorado Springs and Glenwood Springs. Because the tunnel is only one lane, eastbound traffic moves through on the hour, westbound traffic on the half hour.

The Colorado Midland had not been operating trains through Hagerman Tunnel very long before the company realized something must be done about it. The Midland Loop was a real problem, summer or winter, because of its heavy grades and crooked track. Even with plenty of snowsheds, the cost of running trains in winter was almost prohibitive. So they figured a new way under the Continental Divide. As early as 1888 a gang of surveyors got busy locating a new tunnel, one that would cut several miles off the old route and would be lower down the mountain. The new line was located in 1889. The undertaking would be stupendous, but those pioneer railroaders had plenty of guts.

The Busk Tunnel Railway Company, with J. R. Busk as president, was incorporated June 16, 1890, nine and a half years before I began drawing Colorado Midland pay checks. It was estimated that the cost of boring this new tunnel would be $955,000. On the same day the B.T.R. Company was leased to the Colorado Midland for the optimistic period of 999 years, the stipulation being that the C.M. would pay a rental of twenty-five cents for each ton of freight and for each passenger hauled through the bore.

On October 18, 1893, some three years after work was started on the bore, headings met amidst great rejoicing among the tunnel workers. Before the end

of the year rails were laid through, all necessary timbering was in place, and trains began running on December 17.

Let's see what this new Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel meant to the C.M. The long tunnel, when completed, was slightly over three miles in length; 9,382.4 feet made up the tunnel itself, which was fifteen feet wide and twenty-one feet high in the clear. It contained but one track. This track was located on an ascending grade from west to east so that locomotive fires could be banked and trains could drift through. Going west, the story was different, as you shall see a little later.

The length of the new line was 3.25 miles. On the old route the distance between the same points was 10.8 miles, which made quite a saving. The elevation at the highest point of the new tunnel was 10,974.7 feet. On the old route it was 11,528.3 feet. This effected a saving of 580.6 feet in altitude. On the new route there were only 141 degrees of curvature as against 2,099 degrees on the old. This, too, was a considerable saving.

CHAPTER XVI

COLORADO MIDLAND ENGINEER

ONCE more I come back to my first day as a Midland employee. Baker heaters had kept the train comfortably warm all day. Before we entered the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel the four massive gas lamps in my coach were lighted. Dusk was falling on a wintery landscape when we emerged from the snow-sheds above the Ivanhoe station. Only the roof of the tiny depot was visible above the snowbanks on either side of the track, and I noticed how the train crew hurried about their duties while we were halted there. I doubt if our stop consumed over three or four minutes. Even then, the engines pulling us had to take the slack a couple of times before we moved down the heavy grade.

When the conductor came through the coach, accompanied by a blast of icy wind, I stopped him and inquired:

"Why all the rush around Ivanhoe?"

"Mister," he informed me soberly, "if a train stops at Ivanhoe over five minutes on this kind of a day, it can't get moving again without plenty of trouble. Wind howls over the pass like a banshee. It blows the

track full of snow so that nothing can start a string of cars. Did you notice how our engines took the slack?"

Sure, I'd observed. And I should have known about wind and snow, too, having worked in just such weather and on the same kind of mountain territory most of my life. I anticipated another tilt with Old Man Winter. Railroading on the flats was pretty dull business; I was glad to be back among the peaks and canyons.

Basalt was a bustling little railroad terminal, with several branch and helper crews working out of there. A long enginehouse had two stalls, each capable of holding half a dozen engines. A water tank, a depot, and a coal chute, plus a cluster of railroaders' homes, completed the picture. A sign on the depot read: "6614 feet above sea level." Down here, the snow was very light.

Since Basalt was to be my home, I hunted up a room and then reported to the roundhouse foreman for duty.

"You'll catch engine 48 helping passenger out of here in the A. M.," the foreman told me. "'Crazy Horse' Nelson is laying off. The 48 is his engine."

I sensed something back of the way the foreman spoke, but I let it pass.

"Just give me a call," I said, "and I'll be there."

That December day in 1899, when I climbed off the train in Basalt, found me in my prime. I was brown haired and brown-eyed and not unattractive to the opposite sex. I'd hardly put down my valise when a soft voice spoke beside me.

"I'll bet you're the new engineer coming to work out of here."

She was pretty as a picture, this blue-eyed girl I found myself looking at. Her cheeks were rosy from the winter cold. Her nose was pertly pugged.

"My mother and I run the boardinghouse," she dimpled. "Most of the railroad boys eat with us."

"I'm a great eater," I laughed. "How about beginning as the star boarder for supper tonight?"

Annie was her name. Her mother proved to be a buxom, elderly Irishwoman. They rented out three or four sleeping rooms upstairs, but these were all taken so I could not get one of them. All meals were served family style and cost twenty-five cents each. The dining room was a long, cozy one with a pot-bellied stove radiating heat from one end. Half a dozen Currier & Ives prints, all railroad subjects, added color to the walls.

A dozen ravenous rails would noisily seat themselves around a long table with a red- or blue-checkered tablecloth. Usually the owner protected the cloth from the soil of the road by spreading newspapers at the places occupied by the enginemen.

Once seated, the food began to come from the kitchen in heaped-up steaming platters. If a dozen were eating breakfast, for instance, they would start —mark you, I said START—with an enormous platter containing at least three dozen fried eggs and a bowl holding not less than another dozen soft-boiled ones. It was not at all uncommon to see a famished fireman or brakeman fork six or eight fried eggs onto his plate at one helping.

After supper that first evening Annie asked me if

I knew how to skate. What young blade didn't in those days? We had no radios, or movies, or auto rides, or hot night spots, but I think that we young fellows got more real enjoyment out of our simple pleasures than today's more sophisticated boys and girls get out of theirs. Sure, I knew how to skate.

The pond was about a mile from Basalt. It was frozen over smooth as a ballroom floor. We hired a hayrack loaded with sweet mountain timothy hay from the livery stable. Arriving at the pond, we fellows got busy hustling a great pile of logs and kindling wood and built a huge bonfire.

With a thick, solid log serving as a bench, warmed by the friendly glow of a crackling fire which shot sparks high into the frosty air, we carefully put on the girls' skates, then our own. Locking arms, we skated round and round. My partner was Annie. It was not long before I was steadying her with my arm around her waist.

I made quite a hit with Annie. In fact, she was very much in my mind when I reported for work the next morning. But I thrust her pleasing image aside for the time being and climbed into the cab, having been called to help the eastbound passenger train out of Basalt.

I found the 48, Crazy Horse Nelson's engine, a slick McQueen ten-wheeler, waiting for me on the roundhouse lead. Clean as a pin she was, and well kept mechanically. The fireman, a dour-faced youth, informed me:

"Crazy Horse ain't makin' runnin' time on these helper turns."

"Doesn't this engine steam?" I asked.

"It ain't that," he said. "She steams like a house afire."

I shrugged and went about my oiling. The Midland had engines assigned to regular passenger helping. That is why this particular McQueen was a ten wheeler.

Pretty soon the passenger train blew in from the west. A glittering sun made more crimson the red rocks which surrounded Basalt. The familiar odor of coal smoke hung low. I sniffed it gratefully. The smells of railroading are part of my life. I eased the 48 back to a nice coupling against the other engine and went to visit her engineer.

"New man, huh?" he asked me, and as I nodded my head he went on: "We kinda let 'em out through Red Rock Canyon above here. It's fairly level and the curves are well elevated but heavy."

"We'll hit Ivanhoe on time," I promised.

"I hope so," he grunted.

The conductor came over with our running orders. We compared watches and I whistled off. That little 48 was quick as a cat on the throttle. She was stout, and she rode like a Pullman. The minute I got the "feel" of her, on the heavy grade out of Basalt, I settled down on my seat and decided to give the boys a ride through Red Rock Canyon. When the grade let up as we nosed into that maroon-colored gash in the mountains, I hooked up the reverse lever and she responded like a race horse. Down a nice stretch of tangent we whipped, my drivers moving faster and faster. Ahead was an elbow curve. I knew I had a

short wheel base under me, with free-turning pony trucks, so I didn't ease off at all.

I've come mighty close to the Pearly Gates plenty of times in my boomer years, but never did I ride an engine that cut the capers the 48 did when she went into that curve, and rolled out the other end still riding the rails. The minute I felt her begin to fight that curve I slammed the throttle closed and gave the air brakes a reduction. At the same time the hair rose on my head. I jumped to my feet ready to unload if she didn't make it.

"What the hell!" I shouted to my fireman as the 48 grew tractable once more.

"That's the way she acts all the time," he answered me, his face white, his eyes rolling. "That's the reason we ain't been makin' the time."

What kind of stuff were these Midland boys trying to pull on me? I wondered. Of course, I knew that home guards inevitably developed a certain antagonism against boomers, especially those new on the job. But it looked here as if somebody was deliberately trying to bait me.

"Is this Crazy Horse Nelson really sick?" I asked the fireman.

"Naw," he replied. "The minute he heard you was here he laid off."

We did not make running time that day. Even at slow speeds the 48 fought every curve. Her wheel base was absolutely rigid. I thought I knew what the trouble was and would fix it when we got back to Basalt. It felt to me like a couple of stuck wedges.

In Basalt I instructed that the 48 be run over a pit. The foreman was skeptical.

"No use of that," he told me. "She's been over the pit so much that she's sway-backed from settin' on one. All of us have tried to locate the cause of her not curvin'. But we don't seem to get anywhere."

"I want to take a look anyhow," I told him firmly.

When I inspected the wedges I found them free. So, I decided, stuck wedges were not the trouble. I moved on toward the pony trucks and suddenly ejaculated:

"Well, I'll be damned!"

"What did you find?" called the foreman, who was squatting on his haunches, watching me.

"Come down here and take a look," I instructed him.

He had to look twice to believe it. But there was the evidence. At one time, apparently, the 48 had worked where link-and-pin couplers were in use. One day a link had slipped down through a slot above the pony-truck wheels and had become wedged there, growing tighter and tighter with each movement of the engine. There was not a sixteenth of an inch of play in the pony trucks. No wonder the 48 would not curve! It took us several hours to get that battered link removed. I was rather pleased with myself at having located the difficulty.

Next day I gave the passengers a ride through Red Rock Canyon they'll long remember. And we went into Ivanhoe right on time. The minute Crazy Horse Nelson heard his 48 was performing perfectly he hurried back to work. I hated to quit running the 48, because she was a crackerjack, but of course I had to turn her over to Nelson.

I had been running a helper engine out of Basalt but a few days when I overheard a stocky, quick-tempered, little Irish engineer tell the roundhouse foreman:

"These boomers come on a new job thinkin' they know more'n anybody workin' around here. They do a lot of braggin', but put 'em up against the real thing an' they don't know nothin'."

I let on I didn't hear, not because I was afraid of trouble but because I didn't happen to be in an argumentative mood.

I had forgotten about the matter a short time later when I was called to help this same little Irishman up his branch run from Cardiff to Spring Gulch, where were located some rich coal deposits and many coke ovens. After leaving Cardiff, the line followed a steady 4 per cent—and better—grade to the mines. I was running the 56, a Baldwin Consolidated with a dining-room-sized cab.

Both the Irishman and I mauled the stacks off our engines getting some eighteen empties up the stiff grade. Arrived at our destination, I was cut off and my engine was turned so I could go back light to Basalt.

Before I could get away, the conductor came running up to my engine.

"Lathrop," he called, "you'll have to let us down the hill today. Mike's pump" (he nodded toward the Irishman's engine) "has gone bad on him, so he claims."

"How many loads will we have?" I asked him.

"Eighteen, all of them capacity," he told me worriedly.

I nodded and promised him: "I'll let 'em down."

The Irishman rolled away with bell ringing and wheels drumming on snow-filled track. I always made a practice on an initial trip up any grade to watch curves and tangents. You see, it is much easier to hold heavy trains on sharply curving rails than on straight stretches, because curves tend to bind brake shoes more tightly against the wheels.

"That Irishman," I grumbled to the conductor, with an angry nod toward the departing engine, "ain't heard the last of this stunt."

We switched out our train of loads. The brakemen looked over the brakes and turned up all the retaining valves. When I had the air line charged to maximum I whistled off. After holding coal trains on Marshall Pass with nothing but straight air, this was duck soup. I eased them down the heavy grade, keeping the speed steady.

About halfway I'd noticed a mile stretch of tangent; this on the heaviest grade on the whole branch. When I approached it I pinched the train down to a bare walk. It was then I felt another presence in the cab. I turned on my seat and looked back into the face of the conductor. He'd come over the train so he could watch my handling of the air brakes.

"Lathrop," he said, admiration lighting his eyes, "you've got what it takes! Leaving Spring Gulch I got to wondering if you'd know about this straight stretch. So I came over to kinda pilot you down. I could have saved my time and energy, though."

I thanked him, and kicked my brake valve to full release, after giving the train line another reduction.

"I wired the master mechanic in Basalt before we

left Spring Gulch," the conductor went on. "I told him to inspect the air pump on Mike's engine on arrival. I think he figured on showing you up."

"He don't like boomers," I commented.

When we arrived in Basalt, the master mechanic, Mr. Griffith, was waiting for me. He said: "I pulled Mike out of service on his arrival."

"Why?" I asked.

"There wasn't a thing wrong with his air pump," explained Mr. Griffith. "He wanted to make you lay down on the job. But he's run his last engine on the Midland."

I had nothing against Mike. He'd worked on this road for years. I'd only be here a few weeks, or months. So I talked the master mechanic into overlooking Mike's actions and dropping the whole thing.

Until then I hadn't made a trip all the way over the pass in helper service. But a couple of months after going to work there, I was called to run light to Arkansas Junction—we called it Leadville Junction—and help a freight train up the mountain and through the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel. The snow was extremely heavy that day. The engineer on the second helper and I (we were coupled together) had quite a time smashing out drifts and getting through.

At the junction we were told that a flanger was coming west to flange the rail ahead of the freight train we were to help. In time the flanger, with the engine piled high with packed snow, blasted out of Granite Canyon. Not far in her rear we could see the black smudge of smoke marking the progress of the freight train. The flanger waited until the freight

arrived and we were coupled in. I was behind the caboose. The flanger blasted off, making a huge racket as the Consolidated barked defiance to King Winter. We followed close on his heels.

Because the grade ascended through Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel and westward engines were forced to work steam, it was customary for trains to stop at the station of Busk. There the boilers were filled with water and the fireboxes with coal, which was burned under the forced draft of blowers until there was a heavy bed of smoke-free fire. This, it was figured, kept down poisonous gasses within the bore. It usually worked out okay. Note that I said *usually*.

Ahead of us was the flanger, the engine of which left her trade-mark in the tunnel. Also, two more engines on the head end of our train added to the gas left by the flanger engine. I did not notice any gas. But we had progressed but a short distance when my fireman, an old head on this railroad, tapped me on the shoulder.

"Lay down, Lathrop," he screamed. "You'll be gassed!"

With that he dropped to the apron. His head hung over the edge, where any possible gust of pure air would blow on him. I sniffed. Not smelling a thing, I decided my fireman was having a pipe dream. I had set my throttle so my engine was blasting away, shoving her share of the train. I don't remember passing the center of the tunnel.

The next thing I knew, I was lying in the depot at Ivanhoe, with the superintendent rubbing my face with a cold water-soaked cloth.

"What happened?" I croaked.

"When the train stopped here," the official informed me, "your engine was still working steam, wide open. You were lying on the floor of the cab. Your fireman was out cold in the deck. You got a heavy shot of gas."

Aside from a splitting headache, I came out little the worse for wear.

That same winter a passenger train was snowbound three days and nights in South Park, where blizzards really howl down off the Continental Divide. There was no food for the passengers. The Baker heaters froze up in the chair cars, but the Pullman was still steam heated. The Pullman conductor—selfishly adhering to the rules—refused to allow the day-coach passengers in his Pullman. One of the train crew solved the difficulty by hiking to the nearest station through the deep snow and purchasing Pullman tickets for all the day-coach passengers between two towns which were close together. So the day-coach people slept in comfort, in a steam-heated Pullman, much to the chagrin of the worthy conductor.

I worked all night Christmas Eve of 1899, and all day Christmas, and all the next night. There was no sixteen-hour law then. I had found a room over Kelly's saloon, the finest building in Basalt. Around Kelly's friendly bar were gathered most of the railroaders who were not working.

The women folks were home, roasting turkeys stuffed with oyster dressing, baking thick mince pies, preparing hot rolls and homemade bread. Along toward evening the men folks would come home from Kelly's saloon, rosy with liquor and hungry as wolves.

I was missing all of it. Dog tired, I finally got in the day after Christmas. Mr. Kelly saw me tiredly making my way to my room and called to me:

"Hey, Carl, did you get anything to drink this Christmas?"

"How could I, and me working?" I grunted in disgust.

"Come in here, doggone you!" shouted the genial saloonkeeper. He mixed up a bowl of steaming Tom and Jerry for my individual benefit. It was not such a bad Christmas after all, I decided, as I finally crawled into bed.

This day I was jogging down the hill, drowsing to the motion of my engine. The snow on either side formed a deep trench with the track in the bottom. We rounded a curve to discover a little black animal in the trench, frantically trying to scramble up first one side, then the other. He was half scared to death. Seeing my engine bearing down, he quit trying to climb the sides of the trench and headed along the track at a clumsy lope.

"It's a dog, Carl," my fireman yelled. "Don't hit him."

I had no intention of hitting him. In fact, I had already slowed down.

"Come over here," I called across to the fireman. "Hold her down and I'll see if I can pick him up from the pilot."

He crossed the deck and I scrambled onto the running board. By the time I reached the pilot the little dog was just about overtaken. Hanging on with one hand, I bent low, made a grab, and suc-

ceeded in plucking him from between the rails. Although badly scared, the dog seemed to know I'd saved his life. By the time I got him inside the cab he was licking my hand and wagging his tail.

"What are you gonna do with him?" asked my fireman.

"Make a railroad dog out of him," I said seriously. "He's probably got some kind of a pedigree."

The fireman laughed. "Bob," as I named the pooch, must have traced his ancestry back through every breed of dog that ever howled at the moon. He was coal-black, with drooping, floppy ears. His hind legs were longer than his front ones. This, I explained to the gang, was so that he could run uphill and still stay level. His flanks were covered with matted wool. Hairy curtains almost hid his eyes, but did not seem to bother his vision.

Bob adopted me as his personal property and my engine as his particular trust. When I was sleeping after a hard trip, Bob stood guard over my engine and gave the grease-cup fillers some trouble until they won his approval. No, I didn't let Bob ride with me. He stayed in Basalt and patiently waited for my return.

At first I figured he recognized the sound of my whistle. Usually two or three helper engines followed each other down the hill. It made no difference where I stood: Bob waited until my whistle sounded. Then I'd see him coming, a black streak. He'd meet me and follow me to the roundhouse, and from there to the boardinghouse where Annie would give him a bone. I reckoned he was eating all these bones until one day I found about a dozen of them buried in my

seat box. When I told the engine watchman about it, he laughed and said:

"I see him climbin' into the cab nearly every day, carryin' a bone, but I didn't know he was hidin' 'em like that."

Bob came to his end at the hands of a larger dog. It seems the big fellow resented the attention Bob was paying to one of his lady dogs. I missed him a lot after he was gone.

Speaking of animals calls to mind a goat. This should be one for Ripley's "Belive It or Not." But a goat was actually issued an annual pass over the Colorado Midland, with free dining-car service included.

"William Goat," as his name appeared on the pass, lived in Basalt, a couple of blocks from my boarding house. He acquired his finer taste of food by sampling scraps thrown off dining cars. A friendship developed between him and the cooks, leading to an invitation for him to climb aboard. This became a daily habit.

One day William visited the train too long, with the result he was carried to Glenwood Springs. That didn't bother him. He waited for an eastbound train that carried a dining car and he rode back home on it. William thereupon began making daily trips between the two towns. On one occassion he wandered uptown, delaying his train several minutes. So he was issued a pass after that.

This established William Goat as a character. The Basalt weekly newspaper would mention him in its gossip column, as "William Goat came over from

Glenwood today on Number 10." And: "W. Goat Sundayed at Glenwood and will leave for Basalt on Number Six."

Everybody living in the country got a kick out of that animal. I never did learn what eventually happened to him. Perhaps he lived to a ripe old age and was given a genuine railroad funeral when he passed on.

CHAPTER XVII

END OF THE MIDLAND

THE Midland did a rushing business through the 1890's and the early years of the 1900's. They offered a more direct route to Denver than other roads provided. Several times the Santa Fe eyed the line with the idea of purchasing it and extending it westward, but never did. In the year 1891 the total mileage of the C.M. was 350.42 miles, including all branches. In 1892 a branch line was started by an outfit known as the Midland Terminal Railway Company, from Divide to Victor, via Cripple Creek, the fabulously rich gold section. The Midland Terminal had joint usage of C.M.'s track from Colorado Springs. Total length of this, including the C.M. track, was 55.7 miles. This new line shortened the distance between Denver and Cripple Creek by seventy miles and ran through rich gypsum, marble, coal, and timberland. The grade was light and only one tunnel, 475 feet long, was necessary. There were ten important trestles, all wooden, the longest being 475 feet.

The first Midland Terminal train entered Cripple Creek on December 19, 1895. Two years later mine

strikes and a general business slump threw the C.M. into financial difficulties and into a receivership. The receiver was unable to pay the money due on the Busk-Ivanhoe coupons, with the result that the United States Circuit Court ordered a foreclosure sale.

Meanwhile the road kept on operating. At length a New York man named Fredrick P. Olcott worked out a plan of reorganization which was supposed to suit both the bondholders and the court; and on September 8, 1897, the entire C.M. property was sold. The sale took place at Colorado City, in the station. A shrewd Denver man, Henry T. Rogers, acting for the mortgage trustee, picked up the bonds for a song. I believe he got nearly two million dollars' worth of securities for less than three hundred thousand.

The Busk-Ivanhoe bondholders refused to accept the reorganized company and forbade them the use of their tunnel. Thereupon the Colorado Midland decided to reopen and use its old Midland Loop and the Hagerman Tunnel. But the officials ran into a snag. When they inspected the Hagerman bore they found it completely filled with ice! Section laborers were rounded up and ordered to clear the passage. This took a solid month.

At length trains were again running through the Hagerman Tunnel and around the Midland Loop, and continued to do so for the next year and a half. Meanwhile, Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel lay idle, rapidly losing money for its bondholders. Then the latter, admitting they were beaten, came to terms with the

Colorado Midland management. Once more C.M trains blasted over the Busk-Ivanhoe route.

The Midland ran through some pretty wild country and I heard tell of several robberies along the line. I quote the story of one as I got it from Charles Alonzo Cooley, a telegraph operator who worked on the C.M most of the time between 1900 and 1910.

"I remember the Maine, the Alamo, and Pearl Harbor," he says, "but more realistically than any of those I remember Cascade Canyon, Colorado. There I was held up by a bandit on March 11, 1902, at 4:00 A. M., while I was on duty as night operator. It was a small, isolated station in the mountains. I was sitting in my office writing a letter, with my back to the only entrance, the waiting-room door. In spite of the click-clacking of telegraph instruments and the rattling of my old typewriter, I heard footsteps crunching in the snow on the platform."

Cooley goes on to say that soon the door was pushed open and there, in the doorway, stood a slender man clad in overalls, a bandana with eyeholes partly covering his face. From his right hand a .32 caliber pistol was pointed at the operator's head. Looking around the room, which was lit only by a kerosene lamp, he commanded:

"Hold up your hands!"

Cooley laughed. He believed one of the brakemen was playing a joke on him, and he said:

"Hello, there! I thought you left town an hour ago."

The gunman seemed disconcerted at this complacent attitude. Then, recovering himself, he held the

pistol at Cooley's head and dragged the startled operator over to the cash drawer. Cooley was now convinced that this was the real thing. The bandit rifled his pockets and took out his standard railroad watch, worth about sixty-five dollars, turned it over in his hand, then put it back.

"You got any money?" he asked.

Cooley had eighty-five dollars in bills in an inside pocket of his coat, hanging out of sight behind the door, but quickly answered:

"No, sir."

"Where is your coat?"

"Over there." Cooley pointed to an old jacket and overcoat lying on a bench. Searching them, the bandit found nothing. Obviously annoyed, he demanded: "Damn you, open that cash drawer!"

Cooley obeyed, revealing about twenty-three dollars belonging to the railroad express companies. This the bandit thrust into his pocket. Then he changed his mind about the watch, snatching it from the unfortunate Mr. Cooley and this time keeping it. Finally he shoved the operator into the lavatory, told him to stay there, and fled.

After the bandit had gone, Cooley called the train dispatcher in Colorado City, and the D.S. notified the sheriff at 8:00 A. M. Later the officer showed up with four bloodhouds, but snow had already covered the bandit's tracks and the dogs sniffed in vain. I'll let Cooley go on with his story:

"The only clue I had was a distinct impression that C. L. Kidd, a ham operator who had relieved me for a vacation seventeen days prior to the holdup and

had generously given me a haircut, was the bandit. The appearance tallied in every respect. But I had no proof. Later, the agent at Manitou, Charlie Reubendale, confided that he was personally acquainted with Kidd. He said Kidd had recently served a penitentiary term and had a brother who was chief dispatcher for the Iron Mountain, at Van Buren, Arkansas."

Cooley, who was twenty-three at the time, was a boomer like myself. He had already worked for thirteen different companies, but his service letters had been stolen. Five or six weeks after the holdup, he drifted over to the Union Pacific in Wyoming; but a month later he was back in Colorado getting a job on the Midland Terminal at Victor.

When Cooley's train arrived at Victor at 11:30 A. M., the agent greeted him with:

"Okay, Cooley. Come on in and meet the man you're going to relieve. His name's the same as yours. Know him?"

"No," Cooley answered suspiciously, following the agent, who introduced the two operators.

"Mr. Cooley, meet Mr. Cooley."

The man who told me the story greeted his impersonator with these words: "The last time I saw you, your name was Kidd. What's the idea using my name?"

Quick as a flash the culprit fled through the door and ran toward town. The real Mr. Cooley grabbed a phone and called the sheriff. Kidd was caught in a hotel room while packing his suitcase, and was thrown into jail. Charley Cooley never did recover his watch, and he got back only four of his thirteen service letters which Kidd had stolen while his victim was

away on vacation prior to the holdup. But the Colorado Midland management refused to prosecute, claiming that the evidence against Kidd was too flimsy.

"So the bandit got away with only twenty days in jail for petty larceny," Cooley said. "One week later the safe in the Midland Terminal office at Victor was cracked and looted of three hundred dollars.

The great storm of 1899 almost put the Colorado Midland out of business. An army of laborers was hired to attack the snowdrifts and slides. Mighty rotary plows bored and gouged at the frozen faces of ice-filled cuts. Our heaviest engines, piloted by the toughest runners on the Midland, battered and rammed their way up the pass. One plow was snowed in for twelve days at Busk. That was nothing compared to the seventy-five days for another plow at Ivanhoe!

But with Herculean efforts we reopened the line. Colorado Midland trains once more steamed across the Continental Divide with freight and passengers. However, the Midland's troubles were not over. As the years came and went the road was harassed by snow, by labor trouble among the miners, and by a slowing down of ore shipments. It was in and out of receivership over a period of years.

There were wrecks, too. I never yet heard of a wreck that improved the financial standing of a railroad. One pile-up that comes to mind was a "cornfield meet" near Bath on June 6, 1906, in which Fireman Frank Cunningham was killed and Engineer F. J. Callahan was seriously injured. Cunningham

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and Callahan comprised the crew on Number 43, lead engine on a double-heading westbound freight that nosed into a special train carrying Thomas F. Walsh, millionaire mine owner, and I. W. Benson, both of whom were painfully bruised.

Engine 43 was demolished by the impact. The other freight engine (Engineer Dan Phelan and Fireman Percy Bunn, both uninjured) was damaged. The locomotive on the Walsh special was badly battered, but not so badly as was Number 43. Her engineer, Robert Brockey, and her fireman, Ed. W. Hartzog, escaped with a few bruises.

J. C. Vining, general superintendent of the C.M., and W. J. Schlack, general foreman, hurried to the scene in Mr. Vining's private car coupled to the wrecking train. To newspapermen the big boss said:

"Our road has been singularly free of serious wrecks. In fact, in the last fourteen years, but two fatalities resulted from wrecks on our lines. In 1901, Engineer Delano was killed by his engine falling from the track at a point where the rain had washed away the roadbed. On another occasion a broken rail caused several coaches to leave the track. R. W. English, a Colorado Springs musician, was killed and six others were injured out of a total of about four hundred passengers."

We now come to the year 1917. On February 12, the Federal District Court at Denver entered a decree of foreclosure against the C.M. under the first mortgage of 1897, securing nine and a half million dollars' worth of outstanding bonds. The sale took

place April 21, at Colorado Springs, on the company's property.

Albert E. Carleton bought the road after spirited bidding. Carleton was a millionaire mine owner. His associates, men from Colorado Springs, were, I believe, sincerely interested in developing the Midland's territory. Every time the opposition bid, Carleton raised his bid $25,000. The opposition quit in dismay after Carleton had matched their final offer of $1,000,000 and added $25,000 to it. Carleton won. Jubilantly he threw his hat into the air and went around shaking hands with his employees.

On the face of things, the Midland's glory had returned. But the old boomer line was not allowed much time to enjoy the fruits of its victory. A world war was being fought. The United States government took over the railroads, firmly resolved to eliminate wasteful competition. Among the war casualties was the Colorado Midland.

Experts of the Federal Railroad Administration agreed that the Denver and Rio Grande Western could take care of the freight and passenger business of the C.M., which they claimed was then losing about $1,500 a day. Besides, rails, locomotives, rolling stock, and equipment were needed for the railroad then being built in France by the American Expeditionary Force. So the Midland's doom was sealed.

The fourth of August, 1918, was no day of rejoicing for the folks living along the right of way between Grand Junction and Divide; for on that day the last Colorado Midland train made its graveyard run. Small groups gathered at the old stations along the line waved their farewells and tried to smile with

sad faces. They knew they were losing something they could never replace.

Many C.M. locomotives were shipped to France for the A.E.F. and they saw plenty of war service. Others were sold to the Midland Terminal Railway, where they hauled trains over the "Cripple Creek Scenic Line," as it was called, until that piece of track was abandoned. Still other C.M. locomotives were acquired by the northwestern logging roads, and by the St. Louis Electric. The latter purchased several compounds of the 200 series. The Colorado Midland's rails were finally torn up in 1921.

Nothing remains of the mile-high boomer line except the motor highway I have mentioned. Yes, I treasure the recollections of those far-off days, exciting and carefree, when cinders blasted from Colorado Midland stacks and sifted into the cab, filling my face with grime and my heart with joy.

Courtesy Railroad Magazine

A WRECK ON THE COLORADO MIDLAND

This occurred after heavy rains had softened and weakened the roadbed.

CHAPTER XVIII

CIMARRON

AND now we return to Lewis R. Lathrop and the Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge.

Cimarron, at the west end of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, was a busy little railroad town. Five helper engines were stationed there to boost trains over the 4 per cent grades on Cerro Summit. A hill crew was regularly employed. Freight and passenger trains were split at Cimarron. The regular crew took half the train and the hill crew the balance. They were usually consolidated at Cerro Summit. These helper-engine jobs were good ones. When a young engineer accumulated enough seniority, he took one of them.

I had been running engines since the day I was promoted. Back in those times, when a fireman passed the examination to engineer, his firing days were over. He did not have to buck an extra board, or go back to coal for twenty-five or thirty years before he got a regular job on the right side of the cab, like they do in these days of truck and bus competition, and of big engines, and four-unit Diesel-electrics.

In 1890 I found I had seniority enough to allow me to hold a helper engine, so I moved to Cimarron.

The railroad company operated a hotel and a lodging-house there. All the single men stayed at the lodging-house, but ate at Mrs. Mack's. I've already commented on her meals.

On my first morning in Cimarron, along with a dozen other railroaders, I took breakfast at Mrs. Mack's. There was a new waitress, but I paid little attention to her; she was just a child. It was a bright winter morning, with several inches of new snow on the adobe hills when I walked to the roundhouse to get my engine ready to help the morning freight train over Cerro Summit.

After cleaning her up and making sure the grease cups and lubricator were filled, I eased my new charge around the south leg of the wye. Both legs of the wye crossed the Cimarron River on wooden bridges. Both ascended at a steady 4 per cent. It was the practice for all of us to creep up to the main-line switch with open cylinder cocks and a very light throttle; then, while the fireman dropped off to throw the stub switch, reverse our engine and storm down the grade with wide-open throttle. This threw out all the sooty, gummy condensation of the cylinders, smokebox and flues; and this filth fell behind us, so the jackets of our engines were not soiled.

When I had taken water on the main line, I pulled up above the bridge and halted. Our train had not begun smoking up the dark gorge of the canyon—the way we told of their approach—so I raised my hinged seat, closed the cab door, and leaned comfortably back against it to take a little nap.

I'd noticed a group of boys and girls with sleds coasting on the long hill a short distance above where

my engine sat. I had just dozed off when something smacked the side of my head and dribbled cold and clammy down the back of my neck. I jerked upright, mad all over. Fifty feet away stood the waitress I had seen in the section house that morning. Even as I looked she was patting another snowball into shape.

Leaping from my engine, I gave chase and finally caught her. The imp was no bigger than a minute, but she was slippery to hold. I held her with one arm while I washed her face in the snow; and I stuffed snow down her neck and wound up by rolling her in it. She was rubbing snow out of her eyes when I left her and headed back to my engine. Our freight train came thumping out of the canyon and I forgot the incident as I helped the first half of the train to Cerro Summit.

When I walked into the section house that evening for my supper, I looked around for the new waitress. She was not in evidence. Mrs. Mack bustled past and I hailed her.

"Who's the new girl you got working for you?" I asked casually.

"Her name's Jenny Wilkenson," said Mrs. Mack. "She's an orphan. But don't you go making any plays for her, Lew Lathrop, because she's the best worker I ever had."

Gradually I learned Jenny's life story. Her mother had died when she was born; her father had remarried and then had died when the girl was nine, and the stepmother had covered her little body with scars. No wonder Jenny had run away. She was fifteen when I first met her. She had coal-black eyes and hair, and

rosy cheeks. She was pretty as a picture, with fresh, saucy lips, regular features, and an abundance of self-reliance.

It was not long before I took more than a passing interest in her. In fact, when she was sixteen and I was twenty-eight, we were married at a double ceremony in Denver. The other couple was my sister and a young mining man. That was in 1891.

Shortly after our marriage, business went to pieces on the narrow gauge. I was bumped off my helper job in Cimarron, and my wife and I had to move to Gunnison where I could hold a job running a freight engine between there and Grand Junction.

I was still on the freight run when the panic of '93 hit the country. Thousands of idle men were on the move, and flocks of hobos rode every freight train. Hundreds of them tramped the ties with their meager bundles of bedding and camped wherever night found them. The result was that all along the main line were crackling bonfires shooting red tongues into the cool night and casting flickering shadows along the cliffs and fills. From half to a dozen disgruntled men lay around these fires, or huddled over them for warmth.

One evening I was called to take a thirty-five-car train of coal west. Jess M'Dole was braking ahead and Uley Williams was firing for me. I might add that Uley became a soldier of fortune later, served in the Spanish American War, and when he could not enlist in the American forces during World War I, went to Canada and was shot over to France where he spent his enlistment railroading.

Big Jerry Brunton was our conductor. From Gun

moon west I bowled right along, and after taking water at Elk Creek, sixteen miles west of Gunnison, hurled my train over Cebolla Sag. The track west of Cebolla winds through a canyon of that name, following the twists and turns of the Gunnison River. Hobo fires were strung all along the line.

M'Dole was perched on his seat, which was a board extending from boiler top to window ledge, in front of Uley. M'Dole was resting his eyes, but we paid no attention because Uley had plenty of time to keep an eye out for rocks. I was working a light throttle when we approached the short, wooden trestle which crossed a dry stream called Red Creek. As my engine nosed around a curve so Uley could see Red Creek Bridge, he suddenly jumped to his feet, yelled something and jumped. I caught what sounded like "fire" but was not sure.

Jesu!" I yelled, seeing Uley's warning had failed to wake the brakeman.

By that time my engine had straightened from the curve so I could see Red Creek Bridge, or what was left of it. A glowing, sullen mass of charred timber and smouldering embers with warped rails extending crazily over the top greeted my gaze.

M'Dole," I screamed, "jump!"

My first shout had caused the brakeman to raise his head and he was blinking at the ruins. "Hobo fire," he called. "I'll stop and wait for you on the other side."

As I opened my sander, reversed the engine and set the air brakes I caught a glimpse of M'Dole dozing off again. I went through my cab window, hit the dirt on my side and tore the skin off myself in a dozen

places. There came a crash as the engine went into the burned bridge and cars began piling up on her. One of the cars headed toward me so I was very busy the next few seconds scrambling out of its way.

We found M'Dole, his face in a trickle of water that seeped under the bridge. He was dead. The tender had upended and come down over the cab, smashing all the steam pipes and wrecking things generally. My reverse lever was bent down to the floor in a U-shape. It was still in back motion.

Superintendent Ridgeway came down to the wreck on the wrecker early that morning. He had little to say to me or any of the crew. But I saw his report of the accident and it made me realize how square the official could be. His report read:

"Throttle closed. Reverse lever in back motion, bent down against floor. Impossible to have reversed locomotive after she was wrecked. Engineer L. R. Lathrop did everything possible to avert wreck and advise he be held blameless."

Being assigned to regular engines was a good thing in one way, a bad one in another. The good part was that each engineer became thoroughly familiar with the eccentricities of his little machine, knew exactly where to work her for the best performance and economy on steam and coal. He felt a personal responsibility toward her well-being and was always tinkering on her machinery when she was standing still.

This personal feeling toward his engine brought about some humorous happenings. Little Harry

Dobie, an engineer working over Marshall Pass, ran the 407 from the time she came new from the Baldwin Locomotive Works. These 400's were giants in their day. They weighed thirty-five tons and were built to haul one hundred tons up a 4 per cent grade. A Mogul type, they served the company for years and each one of them paid for herself in gold many times. Anyhow, Harry Dobie was a fanatic on lubricating oil. Not satisfied with the grade of valve oil furnished by the company, Harry improved on his by purchasing paraffin and beeswax, which he mixed into the heavy, green valve oil. When his 407 was finally called in for a general overhauling by the mechanical department, it was decided to reface her slide valves. The mixture of oil, paraffin, and beeswax had so hardened the metal that no file or other cutting tool would touch it!

The bad part of being assigned to a regular engine was on the fact that when she was finally ready for a light overhaul, or a general overhaul, her engineer and fireman had to run her to Salida, where the back shops were located, and stay there on their own time until their engine was ready for service again. Considering that a general overhauling sometimes took all of six weeks, this was expensive as well as inconvenient. When the job was finally done, the crew took her in for road service. It was nothing for one of the locomotives to run a full hundred thousand miles between overhauls.

The main line west of Gunnison was laid with sixty five pound rails—thirty-five pounds to a yard. On the east end, between Gunnison and Salida, the

steel was fifty pound. Our west-end engines, after long running up and down the smaller rails, would wear grooves in their tires just the width of the steel. When the engine was finally run to Salida, usually as a helper on a train, it could not find traction enough to hold the rails on the wider steel. Only about an inch of the tires touched the face of the rail. They slipped and spun all the way over Marshall Pass. When the tires were turned down, they were okay.

Picture taken in 1890's

MRS. L. R. LATHROP

Picture taken in 1930's

CHAPTER XIX

THE A.R.U. STRIKE

In 1894 the American Railway Union strike hit the Rio Grande, along with other roads. I belonged to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, but not to the A.R.U., which our officials considered an "outlaw" group. Many of our men joined the "One Big Union" but at the same time retained membership in a more conservative brotherhood. Bill Entriken, for instance.

Bill was a conductor who ran the hill crew stationed at Cimarron. He was a member of the Trainmen's organization as well as the A.R.U.

A few weeks before the strike, Bill and I were called to take a caboose and go to Ridgeway and pick up a train of livestock. Our message of instructions told us to make the best run possible with this train, Ridgeway to Gunnison, disregarding speed restrictions.

We hurried to Ridgeway. There we coupled to a dozen ten ton, single-deck stock cars loaded with fat steers, and made an unusually good run. When we finally halted in Gunnison we had averaged eighteen miles per hour for the entire trip, which included the

drag up Cerro Summit, the crooked climb through the Black Canyon, and stops for coal and water. We both received official letters of commendation for our fast run.

Then came the A.R.U. strike, led by Gene Debs. Bill Entriken did not go out, because the B.R.T. told all its members to sit tight on their jobs. But a few days after the strike had been settled, Bill was fired for having exceeded the speed limit (which was fifteen miles per hour) with the stock train, Ridgeway to Gunnison! He was kept out of service two years. Not a word about my part of the episode was mentioned. Which only goes to show how our brass hats felt toward employees who joined the A.R.U.

The day the strike was called, I took the local from Gunnison to Grand Junction, 135 miles. We arrived in Grand Junction about 5:00 P.M. to find a troop of U.S. soldiers had moved in from Fort Douglas. They had erected tents between the roundhouse and the machine shops. Armed guards were everywhere. We were given messages to get off the railroad right of way and stay off until called back to work. This might be a day, and it might be several weeks. Nothing but mail trains, and these under heavy guard, would operate.

Braking ahead on our train was a young fellow named Johnny McQuen. Johnny had been married less than a week. He was very much in love with his bride and the message made his face grow long and sad. I turned my engine over to the roundhouse crew, took my valise and other belongings, and headed toward my room, which I rented by the month.

Somebody called my name. I turned to find

Johnny hurrying toward me. "I don't know what I'll do, Lew," he almost sobbed. "I've been sleeping in the caboose, but it's under a strong guard and I can't get near it. I'm broke flat and my wife is waiting for me in Gunnison. She'll be worried to death."

"You can sleep with me, Johnny," I offered. "I've at least got a room paid a month in advance."

Johnny thanked me. We went to bed about 10:00 P.M. Grand Junction was plenty excited, what with the strike, the soldiers, and idle railroad men wandering around. I woke about six the next morning. Johnny was gone. Downstairs I asked the landlord if he had seen Johnny.

"Yes," said the landlord. "He slipped out about four thirty. He told me he was going to walk to Gunnison.

"The crazy mutt!" I exploded.

Gunnison was 135 miles away, over Cerro Summit, through the Black Canyon, rough going every foot of it. The country was wild, too. But there was nothing I could do.

Four days later the caller hunted me up and said: "If you want to take your engine and caboose and run to Gunnison on your own time, the company says they'll fix you up with orders."

"Thanks," I said.

I got in touch with my fireman and we grabbed our grub. Our conductor and his remaining brakeman coupled us into the caboose and we left Grand Junction. It was midsummer. The temperature was blazing. I wondered how Johnny McQuen had made out walking the ties to Gunnison in all that heat.

At Montrose we were given another message:

"Strike settled. Pick up full train of ore and bring to Gunnison."

Two helper engines from Cimarron waited to help us over Cerro Summit. We all ate, then picked up our train of ore.

Johnny McQuen beat us into Gunnison by one hour. He had completely worn out a pair of new shoes. He was lame, stove up, and one of the sorriest spectacles who ever tramped a railroad division. Later he told me that most of his traveling had been at night, when it was cooler. He had eaten at section houses along the line where he had credit, and had thumbed a few rides with section men on their hand cars, but he had actually walked more than three fourths of the distance.

When Bill Entriken was reinstated a couple of years after the strike, the hill crew had been pulled off and a swing brakeman substituted. Bill took this job.

Bill was a powerful man, but he was the biggest coward on 4 per cent grades I've ever seen. He was usually under the impression that his train was running away when it approached a speed of ten miles an hour or more downhill. He seldom waited for an engineer to call for hand brakes, but used his own judgement, which was not of the best.

We had a seven-car fruit train one trip. Four of the cars were new, capacity 40,000 pounds. Equipped with link and pin couplings and straight air brakes, they were still a far step in advance over the ten ton vans we handled for years. They had excellent brakes. When we left Cerro Summit that day and

moved down the 4 per cent toward Cimarron, I gave them a shot of air and found I had a perfectly holding train. So I let them out a little.

About two miles below Cerro Summit coal clattered in the pit in the tender and I looked back. There was Bill, face white as a sheet and forehead beaded with sweat.

"Holy Christmas, Lew!" he croaked, "I've done everything in my power to stop you. I broke all the chains on them new cars. What'll we do now?"

"Just sit down and take it easy, Bill," I snapped. "I didn't whistle for brakes."

"I know you didn't. But we're runnin' away, ain't we?"

"No," I said, "we're not."

"But them brakes with the broken chains—" he sputtered.

"That won't hurt the air brakes any. Relax, Bill, relax!"

Another time I was in Montrose with Engine 400, one of the new Baldwins. Bill was given a telegram to pick up a day coach, a car of household goods for Cerro Summit, and two empties, and bring them to Cimarron, using me and my engine. The fact that Bill did not have a crew of brakemen counted for little. Bill made up the train and we started for Cimarron with him riding the coach alone.

At Cedar Creek, a telegraph station at the foot of Cerro Summit on the west side, I stopped for water. Although we had running orders to Cimarron, Bill unhooked from his coach, unknown to me, and went into the depot.

When the tender was filled I whistled off; and since there is a sag at Cedar Creek, I went out of there as if somebody were chasing me. Neither the fireman nor I looked back. I hoisted the short train up the heavy grade, making about three miles an hour, and finally got to Cerro Summit. I spotted the car of household goods about where I thought they could unload most conveniently and waited for Bill to come over. But he did not come.

The operator strolled out of the depot. "Where's Bill?" he called up to me.

"Probably back in the coach asleep," I said. "Go back and wake him up and tell him we're at Cerro Summit with some freight to unload."

Pretty soon the operator came hurrying back to the engine, calling out, "Bill ain't anywhere around the coach."

"He ain't?" I replied in surprise. "Then we must have left him someplace along the line. We'll have to go back and find him."

My fireman set a few hand brakes on the cars we left sitting on the main line, and we backed through the side track. A mile below Cerro Summit we found Bill puffing up the grade, face red, tongue hanging out.

"Where in tarnation have you been?" I asked him when he grunted exhaustedly into the cab.

"I went into the depot at Cedar Creek," said Bill. "I heard you whistle off, but when the coach came past it was going too fast for me to get on," he explained between gasps. "But if you'd had another mile to go, I'd have caught you."

He was about right. He had taken the hobo's cut

off between Slippery Curve and Windy Point, thereby shortening his distance by about a mile and a half.

For obvious reasons, we did not report the incident. I am still dismayed at the recollection that I dragged those four cars all the way, six miles, up a 4 per cent grade, with straight air brakes and nobody to stop them if they broke loose. What would have happened, if they had run away, is not exactly pleasant to contemplate.

One more story about Bill and I'll leave him alone. George Rusk, our practical joker of the Third Division, had been promoted to engineer a year after I was. He was running an engine in freight service west of Gunnison. George was dropping a train down Cerro Summit one day. Bill was decorating the top, brake club in readiness. They had a good holding train and George kept it to a walk. Finally, Bill, seeing that he would not be needed on the top, opened the end door on a boxcar and George saw him crawl inside. A twinkle came into George's eyes as he called across to his fireman:

"Go back and shut the end door on that car Bill just crawled into. Lock it while you're at it."

The fireman did. When he was back in the cab, George released his brakes a little. The train picked up speed and the heavily loaded boxcars began to clatter. Then George whistled for hand brakes. Soon little puffs of dust began coming from the sides of the boxcar. George let the train roll a little faster. He pulled another anguished plea for hand brakes. The puffs of dust from the sides of the boxcar were larger. Suddenly the whole roof erupted like

an exploding volcano and out of the wreckage heaved Bill Entriken and his brake club.

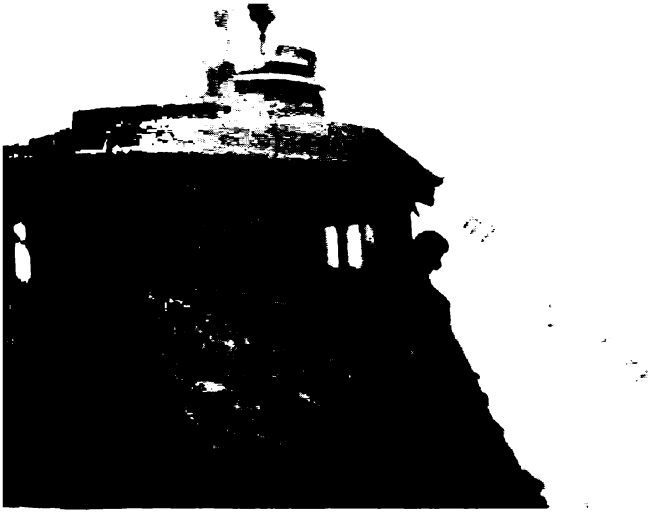
Bill broke half a dozen brake chains but he got them stopped! And George had to dig up some tall alibis to keep Bill from wrapping a brake club around his ears.

Posey Krall, who pulled Mr. O'Conner's pay car once a month, was on a work train while the North Fork Branch was being built. His engine was Number 57, a small Baldwin.

The daughter of Mr. Hotchkiss, for whom one of the towns on the branch was later named, became ill and a special train was ordered to rush her to the nearest hospital, which was in Salida. The girl was suffering from acute appendicitis. Posey Krall was called to handle the special train as far as Gunnison, 105 miles, over Cerro Summit and through the Black Canyon. He made it in two hours and fifty minutes.

On that run the tires of the 57 were worn down to mere strips of steel. Her drive wheels, when she had full tires, were only thirty-six inches in diameter. Just after Posey left Cimarron and headed into the Black Canyon, the 57 threw a right main spring. From there to Gunnison the little engine looked like a Fourth of July celebration, with fire flying from the mud ring.

A fresh crew from Gunnison to Salida made equally good time. Every man who helped make the run watched anxiously to learn the outcome. Reports were sent from the hospital. But medical



FIRING OUT OVER THE ENGINE AND THE ROTARY PLOW FROM THE CABOOSE CUPOLA

On the Ruby Branch, Denver & Rio Grande, above Crested Butte

skill in those days proved unequal to the emergency. Miss Hotchkiss did not survive the operation.

Many changes had taken place on our little railroad. By 1890 a third rail had been laid from Salida to Denver so that standard-gauge equipment could be used. The third rail extended from Salida to Leadville, and a new main line was being dynamited through Glenwood Canyon and on to Grand Junction. This would be all standard gauge and it would leave our Third Division just a branch, a sort of unwanted baby. Talk of widening the gauge from Grand Junction and up the North Fork branch was in the air. And there was even talk of standard ganging over Marshall Pass and through the Black Canyon. In fact, standard gauge crossties were replacing narrow gauge and all of us were optimistic of the outcome.

The great game of railroading was moving like an unfolding panorama before my eyes; from little wood burners to diminutive narrow-gauge coal burners with crude methods of lubricating the valves, of pumping water into boilers, of operating makeshift air brakes. Even then, in the 1890's we heard rumors of a new kind of air brake. It would be automatic. And some safe kind of couplings had been devised. These would be automatic, making it unnecessary for trainmen to go between cars when coupling or uncoupling. Both innovations would save countless lives—if they were half as good as they were supposed to be.

During the nineties the D. & R.G. narrow gauge bought their first rotary plows. How we welcomed

those ponderous machines with their whirring, cutting blades. They were a far step over the old wedge plows, but expensive to operate. In addition to from three to six and seven engines and engine crews, and a train crew, the rotary carried a pilot, who must be a promoted man, an engineer, and a fireman. The rotaries were completely housed in, tender and all. The wheel was never quite evenly balanced and the whole outfit took on a rotary motion which was transmitted clear back to the caboose. But they threw a plume of snow from fifty to two hundred feet away from the right of way, depending on the speed of the wheel.

CHAPTER XX

CRESTED BUTTE

IN January, 1895, I found myself unable to hold a regular freight engine west of Gunnison, so I moved to Crested Butte. Since there were no vacant houses there, the railroad company provided a boxcar for us, rent free. This we occupied, thankful to have a roof over our heads.

In May of that same year our first child was born. We named him Gilbert, using the family name of my grandmother on my mother's side. The boy was not born in the boxcar; I had sent Jenny to Cimarron where a midwife brought him into the world. But Gilbert spent the first year of his life in that tiny car, absorbing the "feel" of the mining road; and when he was old enough he went to work on the D. & R.G. narrow gauge.

I perfected my snow-bucking technique while running the 63, a tiny twenty-five-ton Baldwin Consolidated, at Crested Butte.

A diversity of industry flourished in and around Crested Butte in the 1890's. Half a dozen coal mines worked full blast. Both anthracite and soft coal poured in never-ending streams from the sur-

rounding mountains. The largest coal producer was the "Old Mine," owned by the Rockefeller interests. Long banks of coke ovens made the night sky lurid with leaping red flames and the sickening-sweet odor of coal being baked into coke hung heavily over the snow-covered town. Most of this coal and coke was shipped to the steel mills in Pueblo. It was claimed that the best steam coal west of Pennsylvania was mined in and around Crested Butte.

Extending west from Crested Butte and over Kebler Pass, a twelve-mile branch line served the silver-mining camp of Irwin, and some tremendous anthracite mines at Ruby. The United States government used this anthracite coal in the boilers of their navy ships on the west coast. Nine cars of these shiny black diamonds were billed to San Francisco, California, daily.

On the west side of Kebler Pass the roadbed for the track was cut from an almost precipitous mountainside. At several places bridges had to be built because of almost perpendicular cliffs.

When I started running the 63 at Crested Butte, the branch to Ruby was extremely hazardous. Snow slides occurred almost constantly. My engine and I were buried dozens of times. Fortunately, I never had a locomotive turned over by snow slides while I ran the switch engine up there. That experience was to come later in my railroad life.

These white avalanches would rocket down and fill the bench occupied by the track. They would pile up to thirty-five and forty feet deep on the high side and taper to ten or twelve on the low. In bucking out these slides, the section men would

shovel down to a depth which my engine would handle, armed with a steel butterfly wedge plow bolted on the front end. Then we'd have at it. I would not take the chances now that I took in the wild, free days of my youth. But then, I loved it. What greater thrill than in reversing my engine, backing half a mile up the track, and then, after a couple of short, warning blasts on my peanut-wagon whistle, shoving the reverse lever forward, opening the throttle wide, and seeing how fast I could put my locomotive into it? There was a surge of excitement in feeling the weight of the snow cushion us to a stop, in sliding my reverse lever to back motion before we were completely halted and feeling the little 63 pull herself free. I've bucked snow in this manner eight and ten hours without a pause except to allow the section men to shovel snow into the tender to be melted for water.

Snow slides also ran on the Smith Hill branch, which extended due north of Crested Butte to more anthracite mines four miles away. These slides came down at the same point each year. When they came, business was generally abandoned until the warm sun of spring bared the rails.

A short wooden trestle crossed Slate River in the path of the Smith Hill slides. In the spring this bridge was always found about half a mile from its original site and several hundred feet up the opposite mountainside. There was a force in those white avalanches!

As the coyotes and bobcats were gradually exterminated from the valley of East River, south of Crested Butte, the jack rabbits multiplied by leaps

and bounds. Soon the country had become infested with them. Their beaten trails in the snow criss-crossed our tracks and could be seen extending for miles on either side.

Evenings, when a full moon made the night almost as bright as day, a gang of us would "borrow" the 63. While one of us ran her slowly down the track, the rest, armed with shotguns, would stand on the platform on the rear of the tender. The jack rabbits would lope along while we burned thousands of rounds of ammunition. With all of our shooting, few of the rabbits suffered, and they increased steadily.

Grouse were quite plentiful and I usually carried a .22 rifle on the engine so I could knock down a bird for dinner. I kept a well-trained bird dog, who accompanied me, and was almost as much of a fixture in the cab as I was.

With the coming of spring, we all bought fishing outfits. One Sunday we decided to take a trout fishing trip to Almont, a station sixteen miles down the Crested Butte branch. Our yardmaster called the dispatcher and asked permission to borrow our engine. The dispatcher was afraid to give his consent without the authority of Superintendent Ridgeway, who was out of town. So we decided to borrow the engine anyhow.

All of us piled onto the 63 and I headed toward Almont. Since there was no branch train running on Sundays, we were not worried about meeting another engine. When we arrived at Almont I decided we had better back our engine into the sidetrack, just in case someone might want to use the main

low. The side track had not been used for several years. The ties were rotten. I eased down below the stub switch and when one of the switchmen threw it, I started backing up. All at once the tender jumped the track. Before I could get halted it was half turned over. The rails had spread so that nothing but mud was under the tender.

There we were with a "borrowed" engine, no authority for being in Almont, and badly in need of a wrecker. But to have called the wrecker would have meant dismissal for the whole crew. We forgot about our fishing trip. We packed ties, broke the lock on the section mens' tool house, and packed their jacks to the derailment. All of us worked like beavers, and just as it grew dusk we succeeded in getting the tender back on the rails. Never again did we "borrow" an engine to go fishing.

Another day, five cars ran away and started down the water grade of the twenty-eight-mile branch toward Gunnison. We saw them moving off, so the yardmaster and his helpers jumped on the front footboard and we started to run them down. The five cars, all heavily loaded with coal, had a fair start on us and when we rolled into Slate Cut, they were nowhere in sight. I was running the 63 as fast as she would turn a wheel, and I had no intention of putting her bottom-side-up in East River. We howled around the curves in Slate Cut and nosed out on a long tangent the other side. Those five cars were about a mile ahead and were gaining speed every second.

The yardmaster came back over the running

board and edged in in front of me on my side of the cab. "Think you can catch them, Lew?" he shouted.

I shook my head. "They're running fifty miles an hour right now," I yelled. "I'm afraid they'll pile up somewhere and we'll smash into the wreckage before we can get stopped."

He hadn't thought of that. He looked a question at me. I opened the throttle a little wider and grinned. "We've got to risk it," I told him.

"I'm game if you are," he promised and went back to the footboard.

Fortunately it was not time for the 347, the regular train, to leave Gunnison, but if the cars stayed on the rails and hurtled down the main line there, they would find the 347 made up and ready to pull out.

The runaway cars were still ahead of us when we streaked through Almont. From Almont south extends a short, crooked canyon. The main line climbs along here on a light grade, so trains going down the branch are forced to work steam on the engine. I dared not hope that the Almont Sag would slow the cars enough for us to overtake them. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I saw them bobbing along ahead, still moving briskly enough but slowed by the upgrade.

The yardmaster made a perfect coupling with link and pin, and I stopped the runaways as quickly as possible. We dragged them back to Crested Butte where they were set on the scale track and securely blocked. Nobody knew a thing about it but the switch crew. Had we been asked about running

A SNOW BUCKING BRIGADE

Engineer G. S. Edwards on headlight, Fireman J. B. Haley leaning against the snowbank, and Brakeman M. O. Plewes on the pilot. Note the goggles for protection against snow blindness and the steam hose around the sand dome for thawing out the ice from under the drivers.

orders we would have told the questioner that we "smoked" to Almont and returned.

By that I mean we ran on smoke orders. We kept going as long as the train we were to meet was not in sight. The instant we spotted their plume of smoke in the distance, coming toward us, we pulled into the nearest sidetrack. I've had to back up to a sidetrack many times. And I've forced the other fellow to back up as many times. Nothing was ever said of these "cornfield meets." We grinned and forgot them.

By February, 1896, main-line business had picked up so I was once more able to hold a freight engine west of Gunnison. I moved my family there from Crested Butte.

On my first trip west I was called to take a flanger and a caboose and make a Cedar Creek turn. This enabled us to flange the track through the Black Canyon and on both sides of Cerro Summit.

Our traveling engineer was a burly fellow named Bill Lee. Like Superintendent Ridgeway, Bill Lee had a storm barometer in plain view all the time. Ridgeway's barometer was his white goatee; Bill's was his brown, walrus mustache. When Bill got sore his mustache stood straight out and somebody got his pedigree read to him. Bill Lee was a square-shooting, capable man who had earned his official rank the hard way. He had started with the narrow gauge as an engineer and had shown enough ability to be promoted in a very short time to Road Foreman of Equipment, just another way of saying "Traveling Grunt."

It was Bill Lee who had recommended me for promotion to engineer, and it was he who had ridden several trips between Gunnison and Grand Junction breaking me in.

It was during the flanging trip that my long arms and legs served me in mighty good stead. My engine had no driver brakes. But there were brakes under the tender. We made a rattling-good run to Cerro Summit and were drifting down the west side. Just beyond Windy Point the track follows the side of a steep, adobe hill. I was on the outside, while across from me was my fireman, keeping a good eye peeled for snow slides which had a bad habit of running along there.

Suddenly the fireman let out a yell and dove through his cab window. I slammed on my straight air brakes and dove out my window just as a slide smacked into us. I jumped to my feet and shook snow out of my eyes in time to see that our caboose was fifty feet down the mountain, turned over. The flanger angled upward from it and the tender of my engine was on its side to clear the main line, completely snapped free of the engine. I saw something else. The engine itself was still on the rails! *It was moving off down the heavy grade with nobody in the cab.*

That is where I used my long arms and legs. I leaped after the runaway engine and if it had been another ten feet, I'd not have made it. As it was, I gave a mighty jump and barely managed to grab the handholds on the left side of the cab. I was jerked off my feet and got a tug that almost tore my arms from their sockets. But I hung on. It did not

take but a split second to pull myself into the cab on the left side. There I was, a boiler separating me from any possiblity of halting my wildly running engine. But I was skinny enough to squeeze between the boiler, the pipes, and the cab ceiling. We were howling around Hairpin Curve by the time I dropped down on the right side. My engine was running completely out of control, her rods moving so fast there was danger of her throwing them.

I grabbed the reverse lever—I had no brakes of any kind to slow the wheels—and yanked it to back motion. Then I began feeding steam to the cylinders and putting on my water brake at the same time. Fortunately, the boiler was full of water. We always saw to that before "tipping over" the top of the hill because low water would run forward on the crown sheet and burn the back end of it if we didn't.

A short distance below Hairpin Curve I got halted. Then I ran her back up the 4 per cent grade and you can imagine how surprised the rest of the crew were when they saw me again. All of them had been positive I was a fool to have caught the runaway, hoping to stop her. After I explained that it was perfectly safe to ride her down to Cedar Creek, where we could report the wreck, they climbed into the cab and away we went. The main line was not blocked behind us, and we knew the following train could get past without any trouble. I bucked half a dozen small drifts off the track on the run to Cedar Creek. That half an engine knifed through them a lot easier than she would have dragging her tender, flanger, and caboose.

I'll never forget the expression on the operator's face at Cedar Creek when he heard us rolling down the main line. He came outside, actually rubbing his eyes and talking to himself.

While the conductor went in to report the accident, I backed into the side track where we blocked the wheels and blew off all the water in the boiler and drained all the pipes so they would not freeze and burst.

Bill Lee was on the passenger train that morning. When they stopped at Cedar Creek he climbed from the smoking car and looked over what was left of my engine. Then he shook his head dubiously and remarked:

"If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. I wouldn't have believed it!"

I got letters of commendation from both Superintendent Ridgeway and Bill Lee over that stunt.

CHAPTER XXI

GUNMEN OF CIMARRON

FOR years I've read about the glamor and romance of the Western cowboy. They might have been glamorous and romantic in other parts of the country, but to those of us who worked on the narrow gauge they were just a pain in the neck. If there was an ounce of romance or glamor in a whole trainload of the ones I came in personal contact with, I failed to discover it.

Local option was voted into Cimarron in the nineties, shortly after the town was incorporated. So it was dry as a bone. But fifteen miles away, in Sapinero, at the east end of the Black Canyon, there was a saloon.

Quite a gang of cowpunchers worked on ranches in the valley above Cimarron. About twice or three times a month, one of them would ride to Cimarron and wire for a five-gallon keg of whisky to be sent down from Sapinero on the morning passenger. On each of these occasions, we railroaders living in Cimarron knew there would be a hot time in the old town that night!

The whisky would be duly unloaded from the

express car and the agent would put it in the freight room to await the arrival of the cowpunchers. That same evening, about six or seven, we'd hear them coming to town, their horses on dead lopes and the punchers shooting their six guns into the air. The wagon road crossed the Cimarron River on a wooden bridge, and when their wildly running horses crossed this, the noise was fit to wake the dead.

They would tie their panting horses to the long hitch rack in front of the store and, led by "Cripple Jim" Mahan, walk onto the porch in their high-heeled boots, spurs jangling, and enter. A cadaverous fellow named Moore ran the Cimarron Mercantile, was postmaster, butcher and general factotum. Inside the store, the punchers would unbuckle their cartridge belts and thump them on the counter along with their guns. Cripple Jim was always leader and spokesman.

"Listen, Moore," he'd say, in his high-pitched, nasal voice, "we got a little demijohn down to the depot. We aim to celebrate a bit tonight. Now, lock up our shootin' irons. No matter how much we beg for them when we get a few drinks under our belts, don't let us have 'em."

Moore would take the artillery and lock it up. The cowpunchers would hotfoot down to the depot and if the agent wasn't around, they'd hunt him up and make him give them their whisky.

Pretty soon the residents of the little railroad town would hear Cripple Jim's "Wa-a-a-it a minute. God bless our happy home in Ireland!" They would know the punchers were off on another of their periodic sprees of hell-raising. The town would become de

[illegible], save for the punchers who would be straggling back to the store, carrying their demijohn carefully. At the store, they would enter, if Moore hadn't locked up. If he had, they'd start kicking down the door and Moore would have to make a prompt appearance.

"We want our shootin' irins," Cripple Jim would demand.

Moore would argue and try to reason with them. When the playful drunks threatened to wreck everything inside the store if their guns were not immediately forthcoming, Moore would sorrowfully get them and hand them to their owners. Mounted on their horses, the drunken punchers would then proceed to "smoke 'em up," which meant to shoot window lights out of the homes and make general aggravated nuisances of themselves.

This condition had been going on for several years; and with time, the punchers had grown bolder and bolder. I well remember the day the gang of them rode into town and got their whisky from the agent. It was May and a dozen housewives had incubators full of hatching eggs. Everybody knows that a sudden noise or jar will kill unhatched eggs. When the punchers were fairly drunk, one of them suggested that "we wake up these sleepin' hombres with a little noise!"

Dynamite offered about the noisiest thing they could think of on the impulse of the moment, and the railroad company had caches of it strung all along through the Black Canyon, some of it to be used by trainmen and enginemen to break up the bigger rocks which had rolled down onto the track. The gang of punchers came back to town with three cases and a

length of fuze. But they had failed to find any percussion caps. Cripple Jim was equal to that emergency. He simply walked into the depot, demanded, and got a railroad torpedo.

About two hundred feet across from the narrow-gauge main line was a steep, granite-strewn mountainside. The puncher tied his torpedo around a hundred sticks of the dynamite and carried the bundle over and placed it against a sizable boulder. Then he returned to his colleagues. "I'll put a bullet smack in the middle of that railroad torpedo," he told them. "The torpedo will explode and that'll touch off the dynamite an' we'll wake everybody up."

Cripple Jim usually carried two six-shooters, one on either hip. He took a stand in front of the D. & R.G. eating house, known as the "Black Canyon Hotel," and hauled out his right gun. He shot from the hip. Nothing happened. Out came the other gun and it barked without exploding either the torpedo or the dynamite. The drunken puncher stood there while he shot all of a dozen times. With a round oath he holstered his guns, tilted his ten-gallon hat over his eyes, and snarled, "Looks like I'm a-losin' my holt! Must be my shootin' eyes has went bad on me," and he limped over toward the dynamite. One of his legs was a full six inches shorter than the other, causing him to walk on one side. But the short leg was a real asset when he got into a fight. He'd simply prop himself on the game leg and take any kind of a blow that might be delivered without batting an eye.

When the gang arrived at the dynamite they found that the torpedo was literally riddled and torn to pieces. Every one of Jim's bullets had smashed dead

center. But for some unaccountable reason it had failed to explode. Jim could do an artistic and fancy pistol shooting!

Of course, each spring saw all the embryo chickens killed by dynamite explosions, and when the punchers were particularly playful they would go to Mrs. Mack's section house and shoot all the dishes off her pantry shelves. I am sure a stop could have been put to this kind of outlawry, but nobody seemed willing to start action.

Few dances were ever held in the schoolhouse that the same gang of drunks did not ride to town and "bust up" the affairs. Their methods were simple, but effective. They would pay their dollars, get inside, and then shoot out all the oil lamps. Women would scream, men would curse, and the punchers would voice their best herding yells. Usually, when the dancers were all sent fearfully home, the playful gang would kick over the stove, or gather all the stray dogs in town and lock them in the building. Then they would steal all the chickens and turn them loose with the dogs. You can probably imagine the shambles the interior would present when the children came to acquire a little "learning" the morning following.

Both eastbound and westbound passenger trains always stopped twenty minutes for the people to have dinner in the Black Canyon Hotel. The eastbound passenger arrived about two thirty, sliding into town from Cerro Summit with the shrieking of brakes and a clanging of engine bell, to which was added the monotonous of a steel triangle whanged by the hotel

porter. This day Cripple Jim was in town without his gang of punchers and, as usual, was celebrating. About fifteen minutes before the eastbound passenger was due into town, Jim headed up the main line. In an adobe cut about half a mile up the track he took a stand, six guns drawn. The little engine nosed down the main and when she was pretty close to the puncher he began waving both guns across the rails in a violent stop signal. The engineer halted as quickly as straight air brakes would allow. He climbed from his cab to learn the trouble.

Jim shot a few rounds into the air and then he yelled, "God bless our happy home in Ireland! You can just go back and tell all your passengers they got to walk from here to Cimarron. I'm wild and woolly and full of fleas. I've never been curried below the knees."

Arguing proved futile. Jim was drunk enough to do some dangerous shooting if he was crossed. So the conductor explained the trouble to the passengers and asked all of them to unload and walk the distance remaining to Cimarron. The minute the last one was stumbling down the ties and out of sight, Jim stepped off the track and allowed the empty train to proceed. Nothing was done about that, either.

Cripple Jim was approaching the end of his road, but not before he pulled a dozen more lawless stunts. The wooden platform at the depot extended past the Black Canyon Hotel and ended abruptly by dropping off a dozen feet to the river's edge. One day the punchers were celebrating as usual and during the course of their revels they decided a ride on something

other than a horse was in order. They borrowed the four wheeled truck used for unloading express and coal and most of them piled on. A couple of the more sober decided to act as motive power. Down the platform they went, yelling and singing. By the time they came to the end of the porch, the two pushers were running as fast as their legs would carry them. Rather than jump off the end with the truck, they simply loosed all holds and over went the truck, spilling punchers all over the scenery. Fortunately, or unfortunately, provided how one looks at it, none was killed. But Cimarron enjoyed a period of calm for several weeks while contusions and broken bones healed.

A few years later Cripple Jim was killed. He died with his boots on. The unfortunate thing for him was that he met a gent who was as tough as he was and how. Jim started to argue the point, he got properly perforated. A coroner's jury exonerated the benefactor of the Cimarron public, and the bad punchers of the community, lacking a leader, stopped their depredations.

CHAPTER XXII

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN

A COMMON expression among those who follow the iron trail is:

Anything can happen on a railroad. I've seen many unaccountable things take place, and wondered about them after they were over. They strike when one least expects them.

For several years I was shuttled over the Third Division, never knowing from one day to the next where I was going to be. We west-end men protected the Crested Butte branch, the Lake City branch, the Ouray branch and the main line to Grand Junction. The same winter I ran down the runaway engine, I caught a trip to Crested Butte one night. The snow was fairly heavy so we coupled a flanger behind our engine, then picked up a string of empty coal and coke cars. It was a startlingly weird sight to round the last curve below Crested Butte and see the red reflection of the coke ovens painted against a timber-line, snow-covered background. Going up the snow gave us no trouble.

Since there were no loaded cars to bring out of

Crested Butte, we were instructed to flange the track back to Gunnison.

These narrow-gauge flangers were an ingenious device, only perfected within the past few years, and every man of us appreciated them. They were little more than a heavy oak frame mounting a steel V-shaped plow. This plow was raised or lowered by an air valve in the cab and an air cylinder on top of the flanger. The flanger body was ballasted with enough scrap iron to make it hold the rails against the heavy lift of snow. When an engineer forgot to raise the flanger blade crossing a cattle guard, a switch, or a road crossing, things usually happened. So we kept on our toes when flanging.

Our flanger kicked a plume of snow into the night from Crested Butte, down through Slate Cut and the tangent below. At a spur called Glacier I manipulated the air valve to raise the plow so it would clear the frog and guard rails. My engine went over nicely; but when the flanger crossed there was a burst of fireworks that illuminated the surrounding snow and I stopped as quickly as straight air and reverse lever would allow. I dropped into the deep snow and went back to look over the damage. The flanger stood solidly on the rails; and the coaches behind were okay. There was not a mark in the snow or on the rails to show what had caused the flash of light. None of us could find anything wrong for some little time.

Just when I was about to decide that I was seeing things and resume our trip, I blinked, rubbed my eyes, and blinked again. The front trucks were gone from under the flanger! Both pairs of wheels, the angle bars, brass housings—everything was missing.

We finally located the trucks fifteen or twenty feet from the track, almost hidden in the snow. Apparently they had leaped through the air to where they landed. It was probably their leaving the rails that had caused the fire flash.

Since there was no damage to switch or track, we went back to our train. As I've said, the flanger was sitting solidly on the rails, as though all the wheels were under it. But the link and pin coupling was holding it suspended from the tender. We could not risk backing up. To have done so would have released the strain on the couplings and allowed the heavy flanger to thump down on the rails. We decided to take a chance on going to Jacks Cabin, next sidetrack beyond, about five miles away.

By a miracle we made it, headed into the sidetrack after cutting off the coaches, and after dragging the flanger to the lower end, we blocked the front end up as best we could with ties, chiseled through the link, and left it there. That's one time when a railroad car ran with wheels under but one end of it.

Another time we pulled a car with four pairs of wheels under it. It came about this way:

We had thirty-five cars in our train that night, coming from Crested Butte. Straight air brakes helped us hold our heavy train from running away. A break-in-two was quite common, owing to the pins working out of the links and dropping along the right of way. A full moon bathed the surrounding meadows in silver and made the night almost as light as day. My fireman was looking back when we

rounded an easy curve. Suddenly he shouted across to me:

"We're broke in two, Lew!"

I hauled open the throttle, hoping to run away from the balance of our train, but the hind end came down too fast. It smashed against the head end with a jolt that registered clear to the engine. I finally got the whole train stopped and we went back to find the damage, if any.

We found plenty. The break-in-two had occurred directly behind a flat car. When the train smashed together it had struck so hard that a car behind the flat car, loaded with coal, had been moved ahead, off all its trucks, and it now rested on the flat car as neatly as though it had been jacked up and carefully placed there. Instead of the usual single pair of trucks under the rear end of the flat car, there were three. All we had to do was cut behind the flat car, then drag it, wheels and all, down to Almont where we shoved it into a siding and left it for the car repair men to worry about.

Imagine crawling into the tender of a locomotive and having it suddenly roll down the mountain with you. That is an experience Marion Myers had, and it did not do damage to anything except his temper. He was firing for a young engineer named Al Krall on a helper engine working out of Sargents at the foot of Marshall Pass. On the day in question Al and his engine, the 44, had helped a train to the top of the pass and started back light. Immediately following him—remember, they had no rule whereby trains had to be minutes apart—came a long string of empty

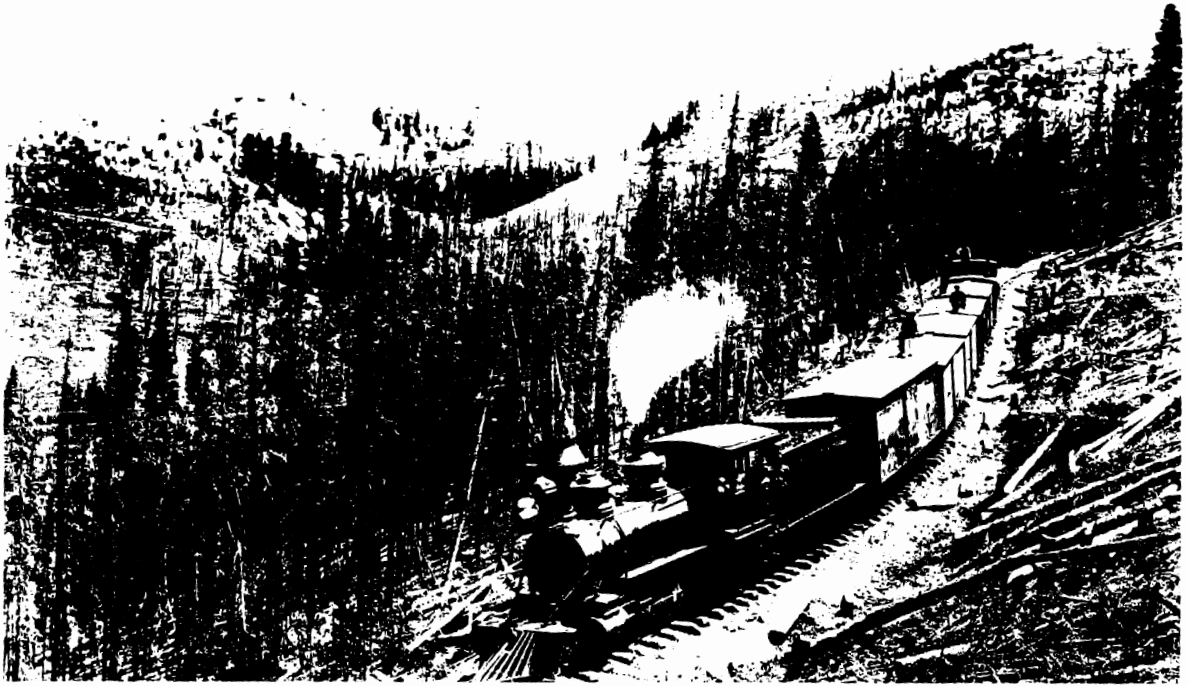
coal cars tied on another engine. Shortly after leaving Marshall Pass, Al's tank valve became disconnected. He figured all he needed to fix it was a short bolt, but a thorough search of his tool box failed to reveal one. He knew his tender was practically empty. Since all westbound engines filled at Tank Seven, because they figured the water there better than at Sargents, Al hated to fill it with the valve disconnected.

He dropped his 44 around the hairpin curves and worried because he didn't have a bolt. Suddenly he spied one, rolling back and forth on the running board just outside the front cab door. With a grunt of satisfaction he jumped out and grabbed it. Then he called his fireman across to him.

"Take this bolt, Marion," he instructed, "and crawl back over the coal pile and get into the tender. Soon as you do, knock on the side and I'll stop so we can fix that valve."

Marion took the bolt. Al knew the other train was following him, but from where the 44 was he could see the track winding along the mountainside for three or four miles and the freight was not in sight. But there was half a mile directly behind his engine he couldn't see, and the freight, unkown to him, was following that close!

Al stopped smack on a sharp curve. Marion was by this time perched over the disconnected valve inside the tender with water sloshing around his shoetops. Almost before Al could climb from his cab the following train nosed around the curve. Whamt! Al's tender was knocked off the track. It broke loose from the engine and down the mountain it rolled.



Courtesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

RIO GRANDE FREIGHT TRAIN ON MARSHALL PASS IN THE EARLY 1880's

THE RESULTS OF HITTING A COW WEST OF SALIDA, COLORADO, IN 1919

When it finally stopped the fireman crawled out, undamaged, but cursing like a mule skinner. Al lost his job over that stunt. He went to ranching and made quite a success of it.

During the St. Louis World's Fair, the D. & R.G. exhibited the first all-vestibuled, steam-heated passenger train in the United States. This three-car train was called the P.B. & M. and was built for the railroad president or for the higher officials. It is unknown how much money this train cost, but from the heavy silver service, the cut glass, the thick, all-wool blankets and other fixtures, it must have been a pretty penny. The rear car was for the president. It had a glassed-in observation end with an air gauge and a speed meter, as well as front-view mirrors so his aids could check on the engine crews on the curves. In this car was also a stateroom with a full bed, lavatory, etc., then a kind of council room. The second car had a couple of staterooms and an elaborate kitchen. The head car was for the flunkeys and train crews to ride and it had bunks for use in case the P.B. & M. was caught away from a town.

It received much newspaper publicity during the fair, and when it finally went into service on the narrow gauge it continued to create publicity as well as profanity on the part of the enginemen having to haul it around with a little thirty-ton engine. Those three cars were heavy! It was like tying a lead rod to a kite to try to hoist them up Marshall Pass, or over Cerro Summit. We finally persuaded the officials that a helper engine would save much delay, and they capitulated.

In the early 1900's the D. & R.G. got a new president. His name was Mr. Mudge, and he came from a pretty high-speed railroad. His salary of $100,000 a year was played up in all the newspapers.

Mr. Mudge had not been with us long when he decided to make a trip of inspection. He would use the standard-gauge president's car while on the wide gauge and he instructed that the P.B. & M. be made ready for him to tour the slim gauge.

Mr. Mudge hit the narrow gauge at Salida and went from there over Poncha Pass, down through the San Luis Valley to Alamosa, from there to Durango, and then over the Rio Grande Southern, then a subsidiary of the D. & R.G., to Ridgeway, and down the Ouray branch to Montrose. Mudge probably did considerable wondering about the speed possibilities of his new pike during his ride thus far and, being of a curious turn of mind, decided to experiment.

At Montrose he got an order annulling all speed restrictions, Montrose to Salida. His runner out of Montrose, one of our best younger heads, really gave Mudge and his P.B. & M. a ride over Cerro Summit and through the Black Canyon to Gunnison. In fact, when they hit Gunnison they'd broken all existing records. Mudge was enthusiastic. When the little ten-wheeler with the shotgun stack coupled on in Gunnison, Mudge went over and met the engineer.

Tom Reardon was on the right side of the ten wheeler. Tom was a west-end man, unfamiliar with the line east of Gunnison. Of course, he had been over it plenty of times, but it was off his home territory. Tom was fast. No doubting that fact. Nothing in the world pleased Tom Reardon more than

to get a clear track ahead and be a few minutes late on his schedule so he could "make up a little time." Mudge could not have hand-picked a better engineer for his purpose.

The little ten-wheeler was swift in her own right. I ran her as well as all her sisters during my years on the narrow gauge. They all had forty-eight-inch drivers, wagon-top boilers, and open-decked cabs. I've clocked them at a mile a minute. They operated like little sewing machines.

The P.B. & M. left Gunnison in a blaze of glory about 4:00 P.M., with Tom playing Yankee Doodle on his whistle and jerking exhausts out of the stacks like miniature explosions. Sargents is thirty miles from Gunnison, mostly straight track. Tom put Mudge into there in forty-five minutes! Not bad going, considering the last mile is almost 4 per cent grade. At Sargents they gave the P.B. & M. a helper and Mudge went over and patted Tom on the back and gave him a good cigar. "You're making a wonderful run, Reardon," he told the engineer. "I'm proud to have men like you working under me."

They went up Marshall Pass like a captive meteor and sprinkled red-hot cinders all over the mountainsides. They had piled up another record when they hit the pass and uncoupled the helper engine. From Marshall Pass, the line drops crookedly down to Salida, twenty-six miles away and almost every foot of it a juicy 4 per cent grade. Tom grinned to himself when the air inspector came over and removed his blue lantern and told him the brakes were okay. The speed eased out of the snowshed. Tom was anticipating the compliments Mudge was going to lavish

on him when they hit the end of the run. Riding the cab with him was Dutch Charley Hinkle, traveling engineer. Charley was perched on the fireman's side because Tom knew his stuff.

Everybody on the crew knew his stuff, only—the year before, one of the brass collars down in general offices had given birth to a wonderful idea. The more tonnage a locomotive could handle on a 4 per cent grade, the more revenue the company would make. Logical, but it seems those little engines refused to handle more than so many cars. This official decided that elevated curves were holding back the train because at slow speeds the cars bound on the inside rails. So he issued instructions to all section men on Marshall Pass to remove all elevation from all curves!

Tom did not know about that. If Dutch Charley did, he forgot to mention it.

Coming out of the east end of the snowshed, the track crosses a park on a long tangent. The other side of this is a high, filled curve, and the curve has about a twenty-five-foot radius. Tom was bowling along close to fifty when he came to the curve. He gave the train merely enough brakes to hold them steady around it. The ten-wheeler and the P.B. & M. hit the curve. Next they hit the hole below the filled curve, bottom side up! Every car and the engine had all wheels sticking straight in the air. The outfit was still solidly coupled together.

From the wreckage men began to appear; first Tom, then the fireman, Mack Allen. Dutch Charley followed. Men were also coming from the cars

Everybody kept asking everybody else, "Are you hurt?" The answer was invariably, "No."

Not a man was seriously injured. One of the colored porters got a slight cut and that was the total extent of the hurts. But Mudge's fast run was completely spoiled. He was a true sport about the whole thing and did not criticize anybody.

CHAPTER XXIII

SUNNY SIDE OF THE TRACK

I LAUGH every time I think about Mike Monahan and his nephew. Mike was as Irish as his name and a good man on the right side of a locomotive. When Paddy, his nephew, came to America from the "Auld Sod" and decided to be a railroader, Mike made up his mind that Paddy would be one of the best. Under his personal supervision would Mike take his nephew and he would properly teach and train him.

Paddy was the cartoonist's idea of what an Irishman should look like. His eyebrows met above his eyes. He had a pug nose and a thatch of red hair that framed his face. His eyes twinkled with good humor.

Paddy went firing the switch engine for his Uncle Mike in the Salida yards. Simultaneously, Mike took the handle off the coal pick and placed it handy on his side of the cab. Thereafter, every time Paddy called a wrong signal, or pulled any kind of a boner, Mike crossed to his side and belabored him with the coal-pick handle. Paddy would cry and promise to do better in the future. But Mike was a severe task master. After crying to everybody who would listen to him, and exhibiting his black-and-blue marks

where "Me uncle, Mike, beated me again today, an' all because av a little mistake I made in callin' av a signal!" Paddy could take it no longer and left for parts unknown.

And I have likewise laughed about Ed Malloy, engineer, on passenger, and his fireman, Selinger. The pair decided that banks were unsafe depositories for a railroader's savings. So both of them bought money belts to wear around their middles, and told all the rest of us boys what chumps we were to trust our money with any bankers.

A few years prior to this, two young men came into this country from England. Both were from good families. But they had been so wild their families had shipped them to the United States—quite a regular happening back in those days when both England and Europe got rid of plenty of their undesirable citizens by shipping them over to America. These two fellows took up a ranch near Dominguez, on the canyon below Delta. Their land was no good. They were unable to get water on it, and rain rarely fell. After consistent crop failures they grew discouraged.

I'd thrown off mail and coal to them, and once in a while food, because they were likable men, and they were working so hard to make a go of their ranch.

It was generally understood that the narrow-gauge passenger trains carried tremendous shipments of gold and silver money. The two Englishmen heard about it and decided they might as well leave the country with a chunk of cash. Then it was rumored around that one hundred thousand dollars was being

shipped from the San Francisco mint to Denver-there was no mint in Denver at the time. The pair hunted up a third party to help them. They procured a boat, which they tied near where they intended holding up the express car, and took a stand behind a large boulder, ready to stop the train when it showed up. They built a fire to keep warm as the night was frosty. None of them wore masks.

Ed Malloy and Selinger came rattling up the canyon on their ten-wheeler. The would-be robbers jumped out and waved guns in a businesslike manner. Malloy stopped and elevated his arms.

"This is a holdup!" one of them yelled.

Malloy rolled his eyes and nodded his head. He looked green around the gills and cast furtive glances toward Selinger. Selinger was busy praying and hoping the bandits would not search him and his engineer. Malloy had over eight hundred dollars in his money belt, Selinger, about seven hundred. The bandits ignored them, however, and went to the express car. They beat a tattoo on the door with their gun butts until the messenger opened up.

"We want that hundred thousand dollars you've got in your safe," one of them shouted.

"But I ain't got a cent in my safe," argued the messenger.

"Open it or we'll blow it with dynamite!" threatened one of the bandits.

"I'll open it," said the messenger. "I ain't lyin' to you."

He opened the safe. It was empty.

The trio went to the mail car. They rifled the registered mail and got about three hundred dollars. They

robbed none of the passengers. Neither did they bother Malloy or Selinger.

When the First National Bank in Gunnison opened next morning Malloy and Selinger were both waiting in the doorway, and both deposited the entire contents of their money belts. From that day on, neither of them made any remarks about the risk of keeping their savings in banks.

Dan Shores, a notorious runner-down of bandits and other kinds of outlaws, at that time a Federal marshal, went after the bandits. Robbing the mail car had brought the Federal government to the scene. Dan found where their boat had been tied and surmised that they had escaped by floating down the Colorado River, through Ruby Canyon. He finally caught up with them and made an arrest without a shot being fired. The trio were brought to Gunnison and lodged in the county jail. I went up and visited them.

"If we'd had sense enough to leave the mail alone, we'd been all right," one of them told me. "Nobody would have paid any attention to robbing the express company, but fooling with Uncle Sam——"

They were sent up for eight years and when they finally got out, the two Englishmen returned to their native land.

George Arteberry, a little engineer, couldn't figure why he kept getting letters criticizing him for a delay of almost an hour to his passenger train while climbing Cerro Summit one day. The reason, "engine not blowing up steam." When he finally tumbled,

he was fit to be tied, but then, it was too late to do anything about it.

George Rusk, the same young hellion who blew the red froth all over the cab of little Billy Cook's engine, and still a practical joker, was then running a Baldwin, Number 400, in helper service on Cerro. The 400 was notoriously weak on making steam, and for the best part of a month George had been blowing up every mile, or soldiering on the job to keep from having to blow up steam.

But this day George was on his own, helping Arteberry and his 172 up the five and a half miles of 4 per cent grade. Arteberry was less than five feet tall, but proud as a peacock of his "on time" record. The boys all called him the "Little Giant."

The two engines started up the hill, the 400 on the head, the 172 directly behind. A mile above town the 400 ran out of steam. George was tired of answering delays. So today he leaned out of his cab window, caught Arteberry's eye and gave him a stop signal. Arteberry whistled once and shut off. Next George gave him a signal to whistle the flagman back. Arteberry did.

When George got his steam pressure back and the boiler full of water, he again signaled Arteberry to call in the flagman. Arteberry obliged, then whistled off when the flagman waved a highball.

They stopped four times going up the hill. Each time George had Arteberry do all the whistling. The conductor did not come over because he heard a blower working and knew one of the engines was not doing her stuff. But at Cerro Summit, when they

halted to cut off the 400, the conductor called up to George:

"I have a little trouble comin' up the hill?"

George looked innocent and shook his head negatively.

"I thought you was blowing up steam?" said the conductor.

"Nope. I had steam all the time."

The conductor went back and put the delay on the engineer who had done all the whistling to stop and go ahead. Arteberry was very sore when he found out how he'd been "jobbed."

George Rusk was running a work-train engine when the band of outlaws came to the narrow-gauge country. They were not killers, just first-class bank robbers and clothing-store thieves. Their best cash customers proved to be the railroaders, all of whom blossomed out in new shoes, overalls, suits and other clothes. The wives of the railroaders began wearing silk dresses and other finery.

A suit of clothes purchased from the outlaws, with perfect fit guaranteed, cost from $2.50 to $5.00. Other merchandise could be bought equally reasonably. A full bolt of the finest silk cost only $7.50.

The outlaw band had a clever method of going about their work. When a store was picked to be robbed, one of them would enter at closing time and carefully count everybody inside. Then he would go outside where he could watch the doors. He would check on everybody leaving, and if his count tallied with the count he'd made inside, he'd "seal" both front and back doors by taking a piece of sewing-

machine thread and sticking it to the casing with a small wad of chewing gum, then drawing it tight and sticking the other end to the door. When they were ready to open up the store, later that night, the "seals" were carefully checked. If undisturbed, the band entered and helped themselves.

They finally became so bold that the law took out after them and, one morning, almost caught up with them.

The North Fork branch was being built at the time. Every evening the work train came into Grand Junction for water and coal. This outfit carried a water car behind the locomotive tender. George, one of the outlaws' best customers, had just filled the water car and was about to fill the tender on his engine when the leader of the band and one of his aides rushed up below and panted:

"You've got to hide us, George! The law is hot on our tail."

George had a nimble mind. "Climb up and get inside the tender," he said. "It's only two thirds full of water and you can stand on the braces."

The two outlaws disappeared into the tender. George closed the lid and was on the ground with his long oiler when the posse drew up. The sheriff began searching the train. He had a hunch the railroaders were playing in with the band, but he had no way of proving it.

"What's in that car?" the sheriff asked George as he halted beside the water car.

"Water," said George. "I just filled it myself."

The sheriff wasn't satisfied. He climbed up on the water car and lifted the manhole cover. It was

boom full. "If they're in there," he said, "they're drowned." He nodded toward the tender. "How about that?" he asked.

I just filled that, too," said George, looking innocent. "I run it over."

The sheriff muttered angrily to himself and ordered his posse to hunt through the yards.

The band of outlaws left shortly after that. One day, a few months later, George received a massive box of prepaid freight. On opening it he found it packed with work clothes, suits, shoes—all his size—and several hundred dollars' worth of fine tools.

"Uncle" Joe Riley broke on a passenger train through the Black Canyon for years and years. This train picked up a topless observation car at Sapinero going west. They would take it through the canyon and set it out at Cimarron to be picked up by the eastbound passenger train next day. Hundreds of tourists were riding the trains and many of them loved to ask foolish questions.

It was Uncle Joe's duty to ride the observation car and point out places of scenic interest to the tourists. He was a relic of link-and-pin days and his right index finger was missing. But he used what was left of it, about half an inch, as a pointer.

One particular day the tourists were more curious than usual, and they were bombarding Uncle Joe with questions. The brakeman did not feel good, anyhow. Near Curecanti Needle, a sweet young thing stopped him as he walked through the aisle.

Tell me, brakeman," she gushed, "how you got your index finger cut off?"

Uncle Joe blinked down at her disgustedly. "I didn't get it cut off, Miss," he growled. "I just wore it off pointin' out scenery to tourists."

When I was pulling freight trains between Gunnison and Grand Junction, a conductor named Howard Hinton was in charge on my crew. Another conductor named Ike Miller was on the opposing crew. There was a good deal of friendly rivalry between the two crews to see which could make the best showing. Hinton, my conductor, was an artist when it came to "pushing" a pencil. When he figured his tonnage it always looked good to the officials on paper and it made the engineers laugh to themselves.

Ike Miller, on the other hand, was too honest to fudge even a ton and he usually had drags both ways over the road.

Hinton and I came into Cerro Summit one afternoon with Ike Miller's train hot on our heels. Hinton rushed over to get his running orders. The dispatcher told him that if he had to take coal at Cimarron, and Ike's train was close behind, to let Ike around him there because Ike would not have to coal up. Coaling at Cimarron took at least an hour because a coal heaver had to shovel it from car to tender by hand.

Hinton knew we would have to take coal at Cimarron. But he did not want to let Ike's train around him there and go into Gunnison second out. So he cut his head in. Coming from the depot he ran over to my engine.

"You'll have to take coal in Cimarron, won't you, Lew?" he yelled.

"Yes," I told him reluctantly.

"Okay. I want you to drop down the hill fast as you can turn a wheel. I'll cover up too fast running for you. Get coaled up quick as you can, and be ready to leave Cimarron. And," he continued with a knowing wink, "don't pay any attention if you don't see a caboose on the hind end of your train goin' down the hill."

He gave me a highball. We pulled out. Hinton caught the caboose and shouted to his rear brakeman:

"Stay on top of the train goin' down. If you miss me and our caboose, think nothin' of it. I'll be ridin' it."

Hinton got busy. He opened the bleed cock inside the caboose, so the brakes would release. Then he dashed out the front door, closed the angle cock on the rear car and uncoupled the caboose. Next, he tightened the hand brake and the train ran off from him. Hinton stopped the caboose just beyond the cut on the east side of Cerro Summit. There he waited for Ike's engine to come into view.

Ike's engineer saw the lone caboose and slowed down. Hinton gave him a "come on" signal and let his hand brake off. He did not let the caboose roll fast down the 4 per cent grade, but held it to a slow walk. Ike's train had to follow at the same gait, with Ike on the pilot of his engine cursing and shaking his fist.

Ike's train did not run around us at Cimarron that day, and nobody ever got a letter about it, because the narrow-gauge heads were not tattletales.

When the North Fork branch was completed, conductor Charley Speer, "Jiggs" to all of us, was

assigned to the daily train. Jiggs was quite unimaginative, and he accepted every statement literally. But he was a good railroader and he knew the game forward and backward. We were coming down the branch this October night. The temperature had dropped to almost zero.

The North Fork Valley is one of the best fruit sections in Colorado. Spotted at an association track at Hotchkiss were seven narrow-gauge refrigerator cars, loaded with apples and tagged to go. The only trouble was that Jiggs had no message of instructions to stop and pick them up. So he ran them. In other words, he did not stop and pick up the seven cars because he had no instructions, although the tags on each car cried the fact they were ready to be hauled to market.

The result was that seven cars of apples froze as solid as rocks; and Jiggs was called on the carpet.

"Why did you run those cars?" demanded Superintendent Ridgeway.

"I didn't have any message to pick 'em up," said Jiggs, secure in his own right.

"But, dammit! Couldn't you see they were tagged ready to go?" raved Ridgeway, his goatee sticking straight out.

"Sure, I seen tags on 'em as we passed. But I didn't have a message," argued Jiggs.

"Message, hell! If you'd picked up them cars on your own judgment, you'd probably got a feather in your hat for it."

Jiggs scratched behind his right ear. "A feather in my hat, huh?" he finally growled. "Who'd want to go around with feathers stickin' in his hat? I'd

look like a danged rooster an' everybody would be pokin' fun at me!"

Unlike Jiggs was Conductor Harvey Gower, who saved his job by using his head. Going west, riding behind about thirty cars, a load of coal near the center of the string jumped the track. The head end of the train was rarely in sight owing to the curves. For eight miles the car wallowed along on the ties and finally turned over, which stopped the train.

When it was learned the car had run eight miles on the ties, Harvey was pulled out of service and fired. Then an investigation was held, but only because it was Harvey's right as a Brotherhood man.

Harvey showed up at the investigation with his representative.

The trainmaster presided. "Gower," he shouted, and the walls of the room rang, "you admit this car ran eight miles on the ties, and would have run farther if it hadn't turned over and stopped you?"

"That's right," admitted Harvey.

"You claim you were riding the caboose cupola all that time?"

"Yes. I was in the cupola. But never once did I see any fire fly from the train."

"I've been instructed by general offices to fire you! This derailment was expensive. Eight miles of spikes driven deep into the ties and their heads cut off. Eight miles of fishplate bolts sheared. Estimated damage to track, over eight thousand dollars!"

Harvey got to his feet, his face sober as any judge's. His hands went to his trouser pockets, felt

futilely through and finally came out palms upward and empty.

"I didn't bring that much cash money with me," he apologized, "but if you'll give me a little time to raise that amount——"

The trainmaster, hard-boiled as he thought he was, had to break right out laughing. So did everybody else at the investigation. Result, Harvey was given some demerit marks and reinstated with a warning to take a squint at the track behind the caboose occasionally to see if any new flange prints were on the ties.

Johnny Ogden was a young cockney Englishman who went to work in the Gunnison roundhouse as engine watchman. He was a bean pole young buck who wanted to impress everybody with his bravery. One evening a little 200 engine came to Gunnison fresh from the back shops in Salida.

Mack Allen was hostling in the roundhouse. The date was Friday, October 13. While the hostler helper cleaned clinkers and ashes out of the firebox, Mack Allen got to tinkering with the valves in the cab and discovered a brand-new one. He opened it. The bell clanged. Mack went out on the running board and examined the first air bell-ringer that had ever come to Gunnison. About that time he got an idea. Leaning back so he could see his helper, he said:

"This engine has got an air bell-ringer on her. I'm gonna have some fun with Johnny Ogden. When we get her in the house, we'll go to the locker room. Everything I say, you agree with."

The helper grinned widely and agreed.

Johnny was loafing in the locker room when Mack and his helper came in. Mack went straight to the work report left by the engineer who had brought in the little 200. Sure enough, he had reported the flues bored. That was one of Johnny's many jobs. Mack turned around and looked at Johnny.

"Flues reported bored on the 200," he announced.

"I seen it," agreed Johnny, "Hi'll bore 'em right away."

Mack looked across at the calendar hanging on the wall. "Well, I'm darned," he said, surprised. "Tonight's October 13."

"An' wot of it?" asked Johnny.

Mack ignored him. He spoke to his helper. "Mean anything to you?" he asked softly.

The helper looked very sober. "It sure does," he breathed.

Johnny grew attentive.

"I haven't seen anything of him so far tonight, though. Maybe he won't be back," Mack said.

"He might not," agreed the helper.

"But he hasn't missed since the night it happened," said Mack worriedly.

"Wot are you talkin' about?" demanded Johnny.

"Oh," apologized Mack. "You haven't heard about it, I guess. But seven years ago, on the night of October 13, a machinist working on an engine here in the roundhouse had to put in a new mainspring. He got the engine jacked up okay and was working underneath when the jack slipped. The engine dropped. The machinist's head was cut off clean as a whistle and rolled in the pit. I helped carry the body

out." Mack paused while he rolled a brown-paper cigarette.

"Well, wot 'appened then?" Johnny asked impatiently.

"Nothing—then. But next year on the night of October 13 the ghost of the dead machinist returned. He didn't have any head, but he moaned and made horrible noises. He didn't bother anybody, just kinda seemed to be lookin' for his head. That night, he got in the cab of the 200—she's the engine that killed him—and blew the whistle. Next year he came back and that time he rang the bell. He's returned every year since. We've got used to him by now, though. He won't bother you. He does some kind of a stunt, then disappears."

Johnny threw back his head and laughed—hollowly. "Hi don't believe a word of it, Mack Hallen!" he affirmed.

Mack shrugged. "I didn't either, at first," he said. He changed the subject. "Better get them flues bored."

"Hi will," said Johnny, taking up his oil torch. He hesitated, looking toward Mack's helper. Finally he asked, "You got hannything to do hout there?"

"Nope," said the helper, lifting up his lunch bucket. "I'm gonna eat."

Johnny still hesitated. He fidgeted first on one foot, then the other. At last he took a deep breath, opened the door, and plunged out into the round house. He whistled as loud as he could as he headed toward the 200. Mack listened to the clatter of the flue auger, the rattle of the door as the firebox was opened, then he got to his feet and like a shadow was

gone. He slipped into the cab of the 200 and felt for the bell-ringer valve. He opened it a tiny bit, then disappeared into the darkness.

Johnny was on his knees, still whistling. All at once the bell clanged a single note. Johnny stopped whistling. The bell clanged again, like a dirge.

"I'll see you hup there, Mack Hallen, ringin' that bell!" shouted Johnny.

"D-o-n-g!" A silence. Then, "D-i-n-g!"

"Come on, Mack Hallen. You ain't scarin' me a bit," yelled Johnny.

The bell continued to ring dismally. Suddenly Johnny lifted his oil torch and thrust it into the cab. The ruddy glow illuminated the bell rope, moving down, then tightening. "Hi see you——" came Johnny's voice, and it trailed to silence while Johnny gazed in horror at the bell. Then he gave vent to a yell of stark terror and hit the floor in one leap. He came into the locker room like Old Nick himself was after him.

The outcome of that practical joke was that Mack had to keep Johnny company while he did his work thereafter.

As Paddy Sullivan said to Tim Kelly that day when they were pumping down the track on a handcar:

"Tim, there's some son-av-a-dog on this car who ain't pumpin'."

Tim straightened his cramped back and looked Paddy straight in the eyes. "Paddy," he said, "if I thought yez was referin' to me, I'd take it as a personal insult!"

CHAPTER XXIV

VIOLENT DEATH

THOSE were days of lawlessness when the railroaders first penetrated into the heart of the Rockies. Looking back at the men who pioneered the country, we find they held life about the cheapest thing of all. We have no parallel class for comparison these days. Modern conveniences have made the present generation soft. I wonder how many of our present-day outlaws would stand up openly against an enemy and shoot it out? Their methods consist of taking refuge behind a substantial covering and blazing away with a submachine gun, or a sawed off shotgun, or an automatic. When today's average bandit pulls a robbery, he hides his face behind a mask so nobody will recognize him, and backs up his argument with a high-powered automobile and plenty of artillery.

While the North Fork branch was being built a cattleman went into a hardware store in Delta to purchase a .30-.30 rifle. Directly across the street, on the opposite corner was the bank. The cattleman found exactly what he wanted in the line of rifles so

purchased the .30-.30 and a box of shells. He had just finished filling the magazine and had pumped one into the breech when he glanced across at the bank. Backing out of the doors was a tough hombre carrying a gunny sack over his shoulder and holding a businesslike .45 six gun in his right hand. Little explanation on the part of the cattleman was required to tell what was taking place. The bank was being robbed. The cattleman hoisted his brand-new rifle to his shoulder and pulled the trigger. The man with the gunny sack dropped like an axed steer. A second bandit appeared and was dispatched by the cattleman. And a third. Things were done effectively and abruptly back in those times. Rarely was law and red tape called upon to delay proceedings.

Over the narrow gauge there was no man better thought of, or better liked, than Paddy Sullivan. If he had an enemy, nobody ever heard about it. Just as affable, twinkling-eyed, smiling Irishman was Paddy Sullivan, who had worked his way up to be a conductor on the Third Division.

Working on the coal chutes in Salida was a hot-headed Italian laborer. He was one step above a bum because he held a contract to keep the bins over the apron chutes filled with coal and also to store a few on the ground against a possible shortage. The coal chute man got swamped and loaded cars piled up on him until there was a shortage of empties. The railroad company, accordingly, hired a gang of men to unload coal and help the chutes man get caught up, putting Conductor Paddy Sullivan in charge of them. Paddy was given several bunk cars for his

men, a locomotive, and a caboose. John J. McIvor was the engineer on the outfit.

John J. McIvor was known all over the narrow gauge as its most colorful character.

The first day on the job, Paddy decided they needed a few lumps of coal for the outfit cars. He sent a couple of his laborers to the coal chutes and told them to help themselves from the piles already stored there by the chutes man. This fellow had walled up his big chunks and shoveled the smaller stuff into the center, forming a sort of yard built of coal.

Paddy's men had just got a good start toward filling a few buckets, apparently from the outside walls, when the chutes man spied them. He came down spitting venom and curses and ordered them away.

The men did not argue. They left the irate chutes man and returned empty-handed to the caboose where Paddy supervised things. They explained what had happened.

"Sure, 'tis all good company coal, 'an phwat business has he refusin' us a few chunks?" Paddy said as he got to his feet.

He walked up to where the chutes man was standing guard over his precious coal. Paddy did not get rough or hard-boiled. He merely told the chutes man that they needed coal for their outfit cars and were going to take it. Instead of making Paddy a reply, the chutes man jerked out a heavy-calibered six shooter and shot Paddy Sullivan!

John McIvor had witnessed the whole thing. He was beside Paddy when the conductor breathed his last. The chutes man rushed to town and gave himself

up McIvor forgot for the time that he was a railroad engineer. He appointed himself a being of vengeance. Less than thirty minutes from the time Paddy Sullivan was shot and killed, McIvor stormed the jail with a picked gang of burly railroaders. They hooked the chutes man outside, dragged him down to the tracks, and on a crossing warning sign just above the bridge over the Arkansas River, they hanged him by the neck until he was as dead as Paddy Sullivan!

The crossing warning sign with its crossed arms made a perfect gibbet. Few trees grew anyplace around town, the country being too raw.

Their unpleasant task accomplished, the railroaders went back to their jobs.

The following day John McIvor and Charley Hallock, one of Paddy's brakemen, were arrested as leaders. Charley Hallack had been wounded in the leg during the storming of the jail and limped all the rest of his life. They were taken to Buena Vista and lodged in the county jail. But they did not remain there long. It was decided the state had no case against either of the pair and they were promptly released.

I had spent the evening uptown in Gunnison and was returning home about midnight. Suddenly I heard a funny kind of screaming coming from Schafter's Barber Shop. It sounded like a woman and I hurried across, opened the front door, and entered. Lying on the bed was the Negro wife of a young barber who had just come to our town. It was she who made the sounds. Her throat had been cut from

ear to ear. Nobody else was around. Seeing that she was beyond all help, I left to notify the sheriff.

Back up town I was told that her husband had committed the crime and was lodged in the county jail. From the expressions of anger among the citizens I knew things would happen soon, and I did not want to witness them.

Sure enough, a mob stormed the jail, pulled the Negro barber out, and, on the only sizable cotton wood tree in town, hanged him. He was left there as a warning to others who might feel like committing murder. I saw the body next morning. Since the temperature was close to forty below zero, he had frozen stiff as a board. That afternoon he was cut down.

Owing to the extreme cold, it was impossible to dig a grave and bury him, so the remains were hauled to a shed behind one of the many saloons and stored there until spring.

It is told on good authority that everytime a gang of citizens got drunk, they would go out and chip pieces off the frozen Negro for souvenirs, and I do not doubt the truth of it, knowing the type of early day residents we had.

Mr. Kazee ran a gambling house in west Gunnison. His wife was a pretty little thing with taffy-colored hair and big, blue eyes. Kazee was pretty crazy about her, and she seemed equally crazy about him. I used to drop into his place for a friendly hour or two of poker. Sometimes I won, more often I lost. I don't know that Kazee ran a crooked game, but to make

money most gamblers were forced to bury their consciences.

One night Kazee was banking an eight-handed game of stud. Sitting in the game was a fine-looking, big fellow named Kellog. Kellog was no professional gambler, but he was sharp-eyed. The game had been going all night long and Kellog had managed to hold his own. Shortly after dawn the next morning, Kellog suddenly got to his feet and told Kazee he was a "damned cheat!" Those words called for gun smoke or apology, and since hardly anybody ever apologized in those days, the pair went outside to "settle it out."

Kazee fired first and struck Kellog just below the heart, knocking him down. Kellog raised his body and killed Kazee instantly. I was about a block away when I heard the shots. Then a woman began screaming. I headed toward the sounds. By the time I got there Kellog had been carried inside a drugstore and placed on top of the counter. Mrs. Kazee kept repeating over and over, "He killed my husband——"

Kellog was propped up on an elbow and every time he breathed, blood shot from the hole in the breast. He knew he was dying, but seemed unworried about it.

Their funerals were the biggest ever seen in Gunnison and Mrs. Kazee mounted a marble shaft above the body of her husband. Although the cemetery had long since been moved to a new location, the tombstone of Kazee mounted guard over a sage-covered knoll on the mesa just south of the Palisades for years. Vandals have shot at it with high-powered rifles but the name is still visible, "Kazee."

Straight air and tragedy went hand in hand. Link and pin couplings cost the life of many a good railroad man. Nobody will ever know the number of fingers, arms, and legs that were lost through link and pin couplings.

Running a helper engine on Cerro Summit was a stocky little Swede, Oscar Nelson by name. I think among all the railroad men I've known, Oscar was the most gentle, best-humored, most conscientious man. Several years before the event I am about to narrate, the roundhouse in Cimarron caught fire one night. I was double-heading to Gunnison with my locomotive so it escaped being burned up. But there were four little engines inside the roundhouse that night and when the fire was discovered, every man turned out to try and save them. Oscar's engine was among those inside. With the building a holocaust, flames shooting hundreds of feet into the air, Oscar rushed in to try and move his engine outside to safety. He was almost overcome in the cab and barely managed to save himself.

I got back to Cimarron shortly after daybreak next morning. I'd been given a message in Gunnison: "Look out for roundhouse on fire in Cimarron" it read. When we nosed out of the Black Canyon I saw the ruins. The roundhouse was completely burned down. The four engines inside were turned on their sides as the timbering in the pits underneath them had burned away and let them drop. The engines themselves were burned almost beyond salvaging.

Oscar Nelson was nearly in tears over the ruin of his little pet. It was like he had lost some dear and trusted friend.

Those were the days when engines were draped with black bunting immediately they returned from the shops after a fatal wreck. This bunting was left on them for several days before it was removed. It had about the same sentiment attached as that of hanging crepe bow on the door of a home death has visited.

Oscar's engine, on the night in question, was the 407, a thirty-five-ton Baldwin Consolidated. She was equipped with straight air brakes and link and pin couplings. Christmas was less than a week away and Oscar had made great plans for his children. The two older ones, a boy and a girl, were taking parts in a Christmas Eve entertainment at the schoolhouse.

About 9:00 P.M. a freight train dropped down from and halted on the main line. After the brakeman had set half a dozen hand brakes to hold the cars on the steep grade, the engine was cut off and sent to the roundhouse to take a tank of coal. While there it was found the engine would be unable to finish the run through the Black Canyon to Gunnison because of some defect in the running gear. Oscar Nelson stood first out, so he was called to take his 407 and complete the trip.

Whether Oscar had some premonition that night will never be known, but he returned to kiss his wife and children good-by three times before he finally tore himself away. I was just leaving the roundhouse when Oscar climbed on the 407 to go down and couple on his train.

"Hurry back, Oscar," I called to him.

"Yah, I vill," he returned.

His fireman was a young fellow—just a kid—named Luce. He was making his first pay trip that

night, and he would not have traded places with a king. Railroad crazy, was young Luce. He had hung around trying to get his railroad job for weeks.

I heard them leave town before I crawled into bed. Big Jerry Brunton was the conductor that night and they had a very light train, some sixteen or seventeen cars, mostly empties. Later Jerry told me he never took such a ride through the canyon in his life. Oscar seemed possessed of a mania to get there and back. They went through Sapinero with the diamond stack throwing a shower of sparks into the icy air and nosed into Cebolla Canyon. The grade there is very light and trains are wheeled rapidly through it. Tonight Oscar ran the 407 as fast as her heavy little thirty-six inch drivers would turn.

Half a mile below the station of Cebolla is a long, right-hand curve. From a crevice in the granite a little trickle of water seeps out from the left side of the track. The section men had dug a shallow ditch to take care of this flow, but the ditch had frozen full and the water was running over the left-hand rail.

Oscar's engine hit it. She simply leaped into the air and landed bottom side up on the thick ice of the Gunnison River. She broke free from her tender, which stayed on the rails. Oscar must have been standing up and the jolt threw him between the rails. With straight air, every brake was loose and the whole train ran over him and continued to run until the conductor and his brakemen stopped it with hand brakes.

Luce, the fireman, was lying beside the engine, on

the car, his skull crushed. They picked Oscar up in a basket.

My wife Jenny was supervising the Christmas entertainment. We were just sitting down to breakfast that morning when there came a knock on the door. On opening it we found Emmet, Oscar's eldest son. His eyes were red and swollen from weeping.

"Mrs. Lathrop," he sobbed, "my sister and I won't be in the Christmas entertainment."

"Why?" asked my wife.

"Because our dad was killed last night."

It was like somebody had thrown a bucket of ice water over me. I'd seen plenty of violent deaths in my time, but this one hit me harder than any of them.

Even with automatic air, Oscar would probably have been killed. But automatic air would have halted the train before it mangled his body so badly.

CHAPTER XXV

BIG LITTLE ENGINES

AS FAR back as I can remember, locomotives always fascinated me. To this day they hold the same interest. Avidly I read about each new development in the field of rail motive power.

What a far cry it is back to those tiny, eighteen and twenty-ton engines which were in use on the D. & R.G. when I went to work for them! And what a farther cry it is back to that balloon-stacked wood burner my brother Carl and I rode that day up in Canada! I remember, as though it were yesterday, the little Montezuma, the first locomotive on the D. & R.G. And the tiny 13 with her tallow cups on the valve chamber and her oil headlight; her non-lifter injector on the left side, the water pump on the right.

Then came the Grant 200's, and the ten-wheelers that we called "Shotguns." To us, those new engines were as modern as today's Diesel-electrics, in use on all of the major railroads.

Next came the Baldwin 400's. They were giants in their day, weighing thirty-five tons when ready for the road.

In the early 1900's our railroad purchased fifteen new narrow-gauge engines for service over Marshall Pass and Cumbres Pass. These were mammoth locomotives and came to us as Vuclan Compounds, a brand new departure in motive power building. They weighed almost seventy tons. Their frames were outside the wheels and the rods worked on cranks. They had square fireboxes and were rated to pull almost twice the tonnage of our earlier engines on 4 per cent grades. Fortunately for us, the bridges were too weak to hold up their ponderous weight west of Gunnison.

The engineers on Marshall Pass were scared to death when the first of them came in loaded on a standard gauge flat car. All the narrow-gauge men trooped to the roundhouse to see this Vuclan Compound.

"She'll never go around them sharp curves on the pass. She's too heavy for the ties and rails. The bridges won't hold her up!" These and dozens of other objections were voiced that day.

A little fellow named Harry Dobie was assigned to the first of the new engines. His brother, Tom, accompanied him down to the roundhouse that first trip. Tom stared at her with open mouth and shaking head. At last he gasped: "Handle her easy, Brother Harry. She's a monster!"

Harry took her out. She went around the sharpest curves as though they were not there. She rode far easier than any narrow-gauge engine he'd ever run. She handled tonnage with ease and Harry could not beat her out of steam.

The new compounds were whirlwinds—until the

freezing weather of fall set in. Then a thousand unforseen steam leaks developed. They ascended Marshall Pass wreathed in a thick steam fog. One viewing a working compound from the side of the track saw a big white cloud with a string of coal cars trailing it. The company realized the new engines were great tonnage handlers, but failures in every other way. So they were taken into the shops and converted to simple engines.

Because of the way they held the rails and the impossibility of turning them over, they were called "mud hens." When one of them did jump the track —which was rare—she wallowed along on her outside frame and bogged down, still upright.

The mud hens were numbered 450-464. One afternoon the 450 left Gunnison with a heavy train of coal. For some reason she refused to make a pound of steam with the result that the engineer had to stop three times in the eleven miles between Gunnison and Parlin and blow up. The fireman tried every trick he knew to keep her hot, but to no avail. They had a meet with a train at Parlin so they pulled into the side track, blower wide open, needle on the steam gauge down to 125. The mud hens carried two hundred pounds. As it happened, the 450 was halted in the side track opposite a pile of scrap iron. In the pile were brake shoes, dead levers, nuts, bolts, and all kinds of junk. Both engineer and fireman were utterly disgusted with the 450 and when they were stopped, the engineer grunted from the cab and seated himself alongside the pile of scrap iron. The fireman stayed in the deck shaking grates and trying to get up steam again. The head brakeman sat down beside

the engineer. Suddenly he picked up a bolt, tossed it into the air and it dropped into the shotgun stack. That gave the engineer something to take his mind off his troubles.

"Bet you can't do that again," he growled to the brakeman.

The brakeman picked up another bolt and made a bull's eye. The engineer, not to be outdone, tried his hand with a brake shoe. He, too, made a bull's eye. The contest developed into a heated game with dead brakes, brake shoes, nuts, bolts, and cobblestones being tossed so they dropped into the stack. The fireman finally got maximum steam pressure and dropped off to join them. In all, several hundred pounds of stuff was dropped into the stack.

About that time the engineer began to laugh.

"What's so funny?" grumbled the fireman.

"I'm just thinkin' what a rain of scrap iron an' boulders is gonna fall over the landscape when I open the throttle," chuckled the engineer.

At last the train they were to meet came down the main. The engineer and fireman climbed into the cab of the 450. The brakeman walked up and threw the switch to let them out. He took a stand behind the switch target so he wouldn't get crowned by a brake shoe when the mud hen coughed. Then he threw a highball.

"Wh-o-o-f!" wheezed the 450 like a man with a bad cold. Nothing but smoke came from the stack. "Now whoof-whoof!" she said, as her drivers slipped. Still nothing but smoke came from the stack. Slowly and valiantly she dragged her heavy train out of the siding. Both engineer and fireman were

watching the stack, waiting for the rain of scrap iron. Suddenly the safety valves opened with a pleasing thump. The engineer jerked back to reality and he pulled on his injector to force cold water into the boiler. The fireman dropped down to put in more coal. The glow from the firebox was white hot and his fire was perfect—the way a fire should be on a good steaming engine.

The 450 burned up all the rest of that trip. The fireman had to fire her with the door latched partly open, and then he could hardly keep her safety valves from staying wide open. Nobody reported the junk in the front end, and the 450 piled up an enviable record as a free steamer until some boilermaker found the mess in the smokebox and removed it. The 450 quit steaming again.

It got to be a game of engine crew filling the front end with boulders, scrap iron, or anything else they could find that wasn't combustible, and the boiler maker taking all of it out.

Eventually they got the 450 so she steamed without half a ton of junk in her smokebox.

With the advent of the mud hens to Marshall Pass, the smaller 400's were released from service there and some of them went to Cerro Summit as helpers. I was running out of Cimarron again. My engine was the 215, a little Grant. I had been running her quite a few years and knew every peculiarity of that little machine. I hated to lose her, but knew there was nothing I could do about it.

To take her place I was given the 402, a Baldwin 2-8-0. This engine was filthy when I got her. The cab

floor reeked of tobacco juice. Her headlight reflector was black. Her jacket was grime- and grease-encrusted. It took me almost a month of patient wiping and scrubbing, every time we were stopped and I had a minute, to get her cleaned to suit me.

I sensed a real locomotive on the 402, although she came to Cerro Summit with a poor record. She wouldn't steam. She wouldn't pull tonnage. She was slow on the throttle, and she refused to get up and run. Everything was wrong with her. I went to work on her front end—we engineers always drafted our own engines—and before many trips I had her steaming like a house afire. I tinkered on her valve motion. I added beeswax and paraffin to my valve oil. From a failure, the 402 became the pride of the West End. Conductors grinned all over when they found they were getting her as a helper up Cerro. The 402 was responsible for my nickname of "Snapper," and for years I was known by it. When some special occasion arose, it was always, "Give 'em Snapper and the 402 and you'll make it."

Gradually I came to look on the 402 as a thinking, reasoning thing, a dependable one that never let me down. She never did let me down. I'm thinking of the little old 402 as I write this, remembering that she saved my life the last trip I ever ran her. Later in this story I'll tell you about it.

In those days all of our engines had wood lagging. Even the boilers of locomotives were insulated, or "lagged" with asbestos. Since that mineral was almost unknown then, oak blocks were used. Almost every time the oak lagging would catch fire and we'd have to pack water from the tender to the running board and

pour it around the steam dome and sand dome, where it could trickle down under the jacket. Most of the time water did no good and when we got in with our engines, the jackets had to be removed and the smouldering fire put out.

Did you ever ride behind a smouldering wood fire? It isn't pleasant. It stings the nose and throat and makes the eyes water and smart almost unbearably.

All the enginemen rejoiced when asbestos lagging was finally used to replace wood.

Rumors were still flying that the D. & R.G. was going to install the new automatic air and the new automatic couplings when I got the 402. Both improvements had been highly successful on railroads all over America. So we narrow-gauge men anxiously awaited the day we'd be using them.

Almost overnight automatic air and couplings were on all our equipment. When automatic air was introduced on standard-gauged railroads, they had to use a "jack" because of mixed trains composed of straight and automatic air. But the narrow gauge had little trouble. They simply put their cars in the shops and when they were converted over, sent them out. Tonight we brought in a train of straight air equipped cars, the next morning we took out a train of automatic air.

Of course, the company had sent an air car, in charge of an expert instructor, over the system, and all of us went to school until we knew about the new type of brakes.

I'll never forget my first train of automatic air. I went west from Gunnison with thirty-five loads.

I tried to remember everything I'd been taught at the air classes and was able to do a creditable job all the way to Sapinero. A short distance below Sapinero we nosed around a right-hand curve and I saw a sizable boulder in the middle of the track. That's when I forgot the difference between straight and automatic air. I pulled the air valve all the way around and slammed the train into emergency. But we were so close to the boulder before I saw it that we hit it. It kicked off the track and went bounding down the steep embankment toward the Gunnison River. I did not wait until we were halted. Instead, I slipped my brake valve to full release, like I always had with straight air. Wham! Instead of rolling merrily along we stopped with a series of shudders and jerks. I looked at the air gauge and found the needle pointing to zero.

We spent the next hour dragging a car, with the drawbar pulled out slick and clean, down to Curecanti where we set it out and then returned for the balance of our train. Fortunately, I got only one drawbar. But was my face red! With that lesson indelibled in my brain, I managed to work up quite a reputation as a good man with automatic air in the years following.

Few modern-day railroaders appreciate what the advent of automatic air meant to us who operated trains over crooked, 4 per cent grades with straight air. Today, with high-speed brakes, new-type triple valves, and air compressors capable of maintaining full pressure on a train line with an angle cock wide open on the rear, it is a long time since the days when we stood long, dragging minutes, sometimes full

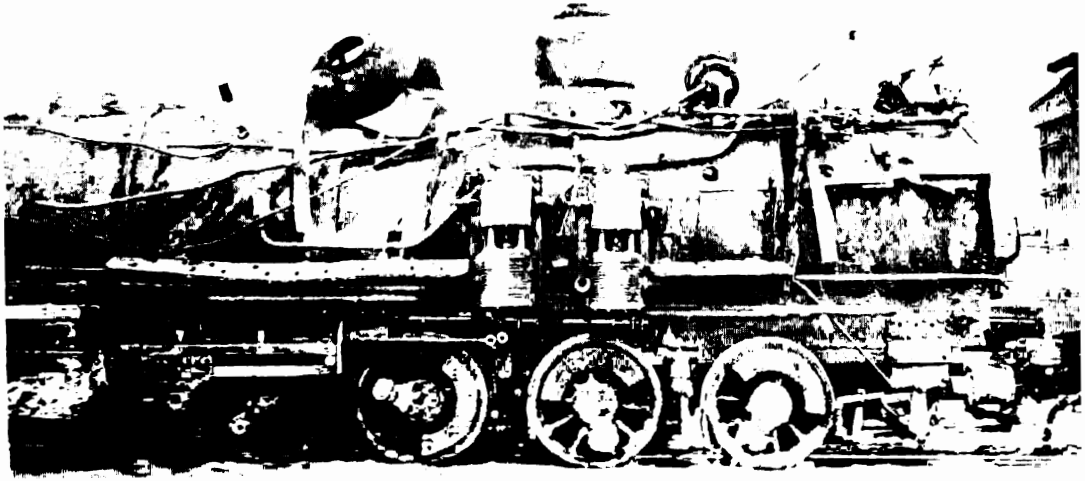
hours, while our little eight-inch air pumps struggled to fill the reservoirs with maximum pressure. The high passes were the worst, where the atmosphere is rarified and the pumps could not get a full breath. Every train line had to be tight as a drumhead. The least little leak meant added minutes of waiting while our pumps chattered and throbbed on the sides of the boilers. Those were the days when a good engineer measured out his air with worried eyes on the needle of the gauge. Those were the days when none of us knew whether we would hit the bottom of the high passes all in one piece, or scattered along the mountainside.

When the machinist's strike of 1907 took place on the D. & R.G., I was running the 402 on Cerro Summit. With no mechanical attention our motive power went to pieces. Rare was the trip over the division when the engine crews did not have to rebuild their engines, almost, to keep them moving. Engine failures were so common they caused no comment.

The Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad, the narrow-gauge line where Sam Montgomery had the runaway and where my brother Carl worked a while, had closed down temporarily. This outfit had some of the finest little Baldwin locomotives ever built. They were trim-lined, powerful, and fast. They were larger than our 400's, but not as big as the mud hens. With the shortage of power created by the machinist's strike, the D. & R.G. leased some of the F. & C.C. narrow-gauge engines. These were brought to the West End for service on the main line and Cerro Summit. I think there were five of them, all told.

They were equipped with electric headlights!

DEER, TAKEN FROM CABOOSE CUPOLA, BETWEEN SAPINERO AND GUNNISON, COLORADO



That won't mean anything to the modern-day railroader, either. But remember, none of us narrow-gauge heads had ever seen an electric headlight. How we schemed and plotted to get to run them. We knew that with a powerful, silver beam of dazzling illumination fingering the track a quarter to half a mile ahead of us, we could see any kind of obstruction after dark. The headlights were the old carbon and electrode type, but that didn't bother us. We kept the electrodes filed down clean and had plenty of sticks of carbon.

Just as with our little engines, these F. & C.C. locomotives, without mechanical attention, soon became junk heaps and one day the F. & C.C. brought suit against the D. & R.G. for damage to their engines. The suit was carried on some little time and the result was the D. & R.G. finally had to purchase the engines at a price very satisfactory to the F. & C.C.

I did not have the pleasure of running one of them. The 402 went right through the strike like a thoroughbred and was still running when the strike was settled.

They were hard days, those I spent in helper service on Cerro Summit. We had no home, being at the will of the chief dispatcher. Through the brotherhoods we'd fought for years, trying to get a single terminal for ourselves. As it was, Cimarron was our home terminal, but we could be worked out of Montrose a week, or a month, without seeing our families. During those days I learned to sleep on a twelve-inch-wide board extended from my seat on the right side of the cab and through the front door.

My feet got achingly cold at night, but I slept on in spite of it. Added to that, we had no sixteen-hour law which made it mandatory that crews be given rest after sixteen hours on duty. I've gone without sleep for as many as fifty-six hours, and other men working on the narrow gauge went longer. George Lindscott, the operator working in Cimarron, was found sitting at his table, taking and copying train orders one night, and he was sound asleep! The strange part of it was that he copied them correctly. Men slumped over and were snoring a second after they stopped in a side track. They fell asleep while on duty in the cabs of their engines, and in cabooses.

One night our head brakeman, a fellow named Harvey, climbed into the cab in Cimarron and we started through the Black Canyon. All of us were dead for rest. But the canyon was treacherous with rock slides and everybody knew he must be alert. It was Harvey's place to watch the track ahead on the left-hand curves, because my fireman was busy down in the gangway.

After a while I looked across the boiler top and saw Harvey's head hanging down between his knees. I got to my feet and shouted:

"Harvey!"

He raised red-rimmed eyes and blinked them rapidly as he tried to wake up. "Huh?" he mumbled.

"You're supposed to watch the track along here, not sleep," I barked.

Harvey was nimble-witted. "I am watchin' the track," he informed me, fully awake by now.

"How can you watch the track with your head down between your knees?"

"There's a little hole in the floor of the cab. I'm watchin' it through that!" was the astounding reply.

"Resting my eyes." That was the favorite alibi of those days of ungodly hours and heartbreaking work. It wasn't so hard on the trainmen because they could stretch out in a caboose cupola and sleep. But the engineer and his fireman had to keep wide awake. Getting a train safely over the road was their responsibility. We narrow-gauge men lived up to that responsibility.

Shortly before 1910 the railroaders of the United States finally won their long battle for a law governing their hours of work. The Sixteen-Hour Law was passed and signed by the President. The railroad companies had argued that this law would mean a breakdown of the efficiency. But it proved the other way around. When sixteen hours on duty approached, all of us knew that we could take off our grimy clothes and get some much-needed rest. The only exception to the law was that, in case the main line was blocked, a crew could be worked until it was cleared for traffic, regardless of the length of time.

Along in 1912 the D. & R.G. began putting shotgun stacks on all their narrow-gauge engines. This necessitated making the front ends longer, but this gave the engines thus equipped a sharper, more distinctive exhaust. The exhausts of engines always did have a kind of fascination for me. I remember the first shotgun engine I ever fired, way back in the past. I'd put in a fire, then sit on my window sill with the upper half of my body outside, listening to that little locomotive bark to the stars.

CHAPTER XXVI

PREFERRED RUN

MY SENIORITY was slowly growing and I was approaching the point where I could hold a "preferred job." About the best of these jobs was on the Crested Butte branch out of Gunnison. This run worked every day, leaving Gunnison around 10:30 A. M. and getting back to town about 4:30 P. M. Banker's hours! It was a very good paying run.

When my 402 was taken to Salida to be given a new front end and a shotgun stack I was told she would be brought back and placed in service on the Crested Butte branch. That was a heavy job and it required an engine that could handle tonnage as well as make running time. This branch run connected with both the morning and evening passenger trains.

That decided me. I'd trail along with my engine. So I said good-by to Cerro Summit and Cimarron with little regret and went to Gunnison, where I okayed for my preferred run. The 402, looking very businesslike in her new dress, waited for me. Together we went into service, hauling empty coal cars up, bringing loaded coal cars back.

I fell in love with that run from the first day

We'd couple onto twenty-two or twenty-three empty coal cars, a coach and a baggage car, and we had to make Crested Butte, twenty-eight miles north and up a stiff water grade, in two hours and five minutes. There were local stops to unload mail, express, and freight. We had to take water at Jacks Cabin, halfway up the branch. An engineer was kept plenty busy making the time.

Jerry Brunton, the same man who was on the train the night Oscar Nelson was killed, was my conductor, and there grew between us a genuine attachment. Jerry figured his engineer could take care of the mechanical end of the run, and he let him do exactly that. But Jerry had one bad habit. He wasn't alone on this. When a passenger asked him, "Are we late?" Jerry would look at his watch and nod. Then he'd go on, "Yes, I'm fifteen minutes late, but I'll make it up before we get to Gunnison."

Always *me*, instead of giving the engineer a little credit! Charley Shively, a passenger conductor had the same habit. George Porter was pulling Shively at the time, and George always made up at least twenty minutes from Sapinero to Gunnison when he was late. You could depend on him never to fail.

One day, coming east, they hit Sapinero twenty minutes late. Shively was over by the engine while some mail and express were being unloaded. One of his passengers walked over and halted. George Porter, the engineer was standing beside Shively.

"How late are we, Conductor?" asked the passenger.

Shively looked at his watch. "Twenty minutes," he answered.

"Will we be that late into Gunnison?" the passenger wanted to know.

Shively looked wise as an owl. "Nope," he promised. "I'll make up twenty minutes and go in right on time."

Porter didn't say a word. He grunted into his cab and when he got a highball, pulled out. They went into Gunnison exactly twenty minutes late! Shively came rushing over when they halted.

"What's the matter, George?" he asked Porter, "have some trouble with steam coming in?"

"Nope, everything worked perfect," said George.

"How come you didn't make up twenty minutes and come in on time like you always do?" demanded Shively.

Porter grinned. "Well," he drawled slowly, "I heard you tell that passenger that *you* was gonna make up twenty minutes from Sapinero. So I just decided I'd let *you* make up the time an' *I'd* just make runnin' time."

Shively didn't say a word. He turned red as a beet and hiked back to the coaches. It is a matter of record that from that day until he was pensioned, Shively never told another passenger how *he* was going to make up any time.

That's the way Jerry was, and I set out to break him. About a month after I took the branch run I got my chance. When coal business was heavy the train had to "double." By that I mean that we made our regular trip to Crested Butte and, after the crew ate in Gunnison, made another round trip. That day we were making a double. We usually took an hour in which to eat. This gave the roundhouse crew a

chance to get the 402 ready for the second trip. When we got back to the roundhouse I moved the engine up the west leg of the wye and backed against a string of empties on the smelter track. This left the snout of the 402 sticking out so the leg of the wye we had just used was fouled. On the east leg, the engine taking the evening passenger out was sitting.

The passenger train pulled up to the La Veta Hotel and halted. The engine was cut off to go to the roundhouse after her long run. When she came to the wye she stopped because my engine had her blocked. And the engine taking the passenger train east was also blocked so she couldn't couple to her train.

I was oiling around when Jerry walked up.

"Lew," he said, "I want to move back so that engine can get to the roundhouse."

"Okay," I told him, and went on with my oiling.

In a minute or two Jerry was back. "Lew," he said impatiently, "that engine is blocked and I want to back up so she can go to the roundhouse."

"Okay, Jerry," I repeated, and went right on oiling.

Another minute or two passed. Jerry returned. "You didn't understand me, I guess, Lew," he said half angrily. "We've got that engine blocked so she can't get to the roundhouse. The other engine can't back to the depot and couple on her train. I want to back our outfit up to clear!"

I straightened and faced him. "I heard you the first time, Jerry," I said. "I waited for *you* to back up. And I heard you the second time and waited for *you* to back up. Now, if you want *me* to get on and

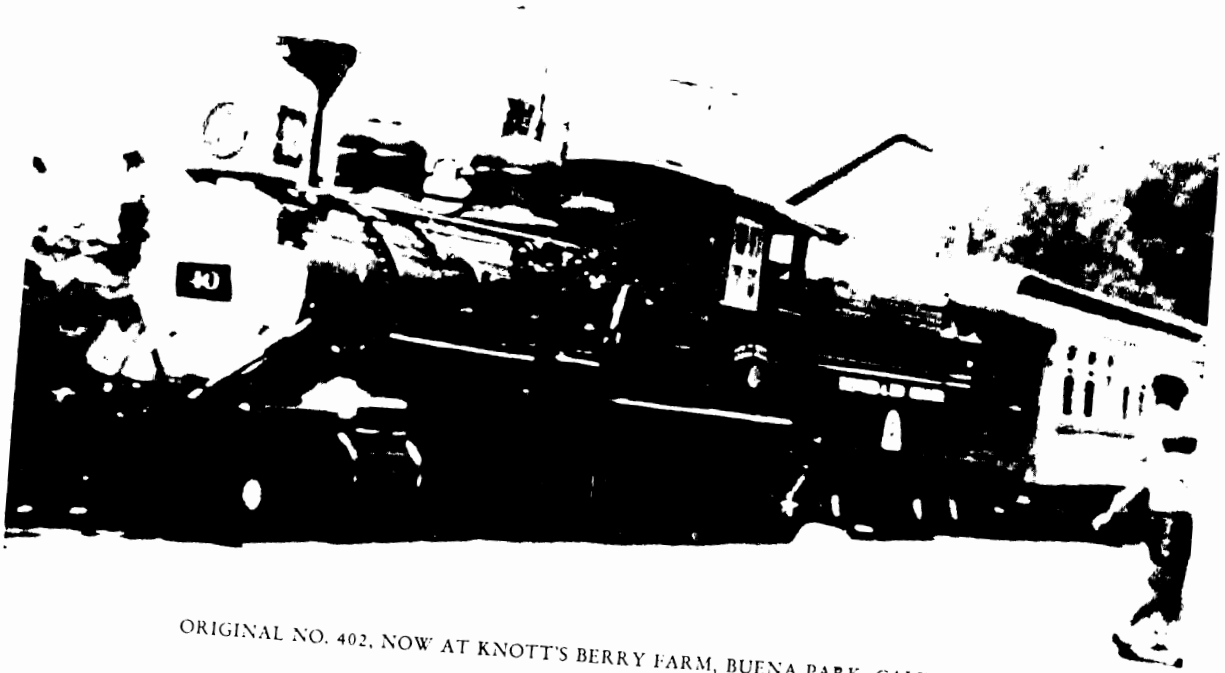
move back, I'll do it. But I'm getting mighty tired of this eternal 'I' and 'ME' stuff. When you want my engine moved, don't tell me *you* want to do it. Ask me if *I* will!"

That broke Jerry of his habit and we had no more trouble after that.

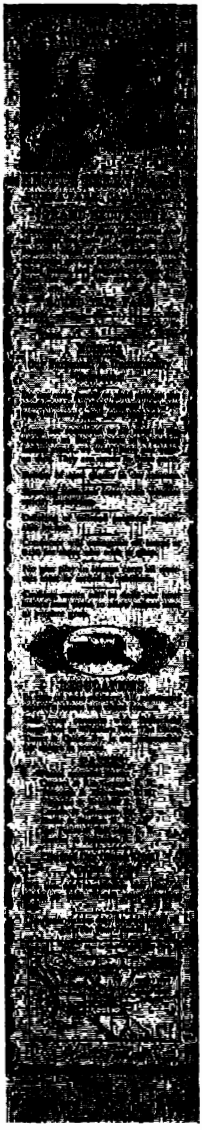
When I went on the Crested Butte run I had three children. Gilbert, the boy who was born while I was running the Crested Butte switch engine, was going to high school in Denver. I had hopes that he would go to college and study to be either a mining or a mechanical engineer. But he wanted to be a railroader. Every letter he wrote me stressed the fact that he wanted to quit school and go to railroading. I've always figured you can drive a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. If the boy was determined to go railroading I might as well let him have his way. In 1913, when he was eighteen years old, I got him a job as engine watchman in the Gunnison roundhouse. I had to sign a minor's release. When he came in to go to work he was the happiest young buck I've ever seen.

Herman Weirick was the roundhouse foreman. His son, Elmer, was helping hostler at the same time. Between Gilbert and Elmer I guess there was little peace around there. They did manage to do their work and not get fired, but today Herman claims that all the white hairs in his head were put there while the pair of young hellions worked under him.

I wasn't around to know what was going on because in 1914 the coal miners went on strike and the switch engine in Crested Butte was pulled off and our



ORIGINAL NO. 402, NOW AT KNOTT'S BERRY FARM, BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA



GRAND EXCURSION TICKET ON THE GHOST TOWN & CAL
RAILWAY

Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park, California

crew was forced to lay over there. From the standpoint of convenience, that was bad. From the standpoint of money, we certainly made plenty in wages and overtime.

When the strike was finally settled we were tied up in Gunnison again.

The branch run was a friendly one. All of us knew the ranchers along the line and we did them little favors, and they returned them. If one of them had a shipment of freight billed to a sidetrack or a spur, and the man lived a mile or two above or below, we'd stop at his ranch house and unload his stuff. If we were stuck in the snow—and it happened often during the winter—any one of those ranchers would get us a hot meal and would not accept a cent of pay for it.

Recently I've been reading about the passenger pigeon. It is claimed the bird is extinct. I suppose they are, but in 1913 a sizable flock of them hung out above Glacier, a spur about eight miles below Crested Butte. This flock ranged between there and Dark Canyon. There was no trail into Dark Canyon, but the birds were seen roosting in the big spruce and pine trees there. Finally a trail was built into Dark Canyon and men penetrated it. The birds disappeared shortly after that and were never seen again.

During 1913, 1914, and 1915, I ran the 402 on the branch. We had our troubles with heavy snow and with snow slides, and we had a few washouts and washins. But early fall of 1915 found the ground already covered with snow, and from then on it hardly stopped falling. By Christmas the snow was about two feet deep around Gunnison and eight feet

deep in Crested Butte. Since there was little wind, we had slight difficulty keeping the rails cleared.

Almost every year in the high country, we have a "January thaw." The weather becomes almost uncomfortably warm. That is when white avalanches thunder down the steep mountainsides and take their toll of human life.

On January 16, 1916, I was called to leave Gunnison on time. It was a muggy, warm morning that presaged no good. The snow underfoot was soggy and one could see it settle as it thawed. At the round house I found the 402 nosed against a flanger, while coupled ahead of the flanger was the 274 with a big wedge plow bolted on her front end. A young engineer named "Jap" Berryhill was oiling around the 274. As I passed him he looked up and smiled. "Looks kinda bad, don't it, Lew?" he greeted.

I nodded. "We'll find slides down today," I prophesied.

The 402 had a tender piled high with good lump coal and when I kicked her side rods I found the grease cups had been filled. When the grease cups were empty the rods rattled on their pins.

I had the 402 oiled around when our brakeman came over to let us out on our train. "What are we gettin' this morning?" I asked him.

"The coaches is all. The dispatcher got a report that a couple of slides are down in Slate Cut," he told me.

We moved forward, cylinder cocks open to clear the valve chambers, cylinders, and smokeboxes of water and soot. We coupled on the coaches while we waited for our running orders. My son, Gilbert, came up

below the cab. "Better keep a good eye out for slides today, Dad," he called.

"I will," I promised.

I anticipated no trouble in getting through to Crested Butte. Of course, we'd find a few slides in Slate Cut, but the two engine would knock them off the track, and the flanger would leave a good rail behind us.

We were on time when we nosed into Slate Cut. We could see a couple of slides over the rails, but they were clean and we knocked them off without stopping to prospect them. We narrow-gauge engineers always looked at the color of snow slides. If they were streaked with red, or brown, or gray, they might contain rocks or trees. But if they were clean and white, we knew there were no rocks or logs in them.

We proceeded to within sight of Crested Butte, about a mile away. The town, almost buried under a deep blanket of snow, huddled beneath a pall of black smoke.

To the average person, a locomotive is just a man-made creation of nuts, bolts, pieces of steel and iron and wood. I suppose a man would be laughed at were he to give an engine a few human traits, or a bit of vibrant life. But the 402 and I had been together quite a few years. She knew me and I knew her. The few times I had laid off a trip or two, other engineers had cursed her and claimed she was the poorest engine on the entire narrow gauge. My engine and I had our past record to point to, and we were not ashamed of it. What follows is just the way it happened. You can draw your own conclusions.

There we were, two little engines, a flanger, and the two coaches crawling along the sidehill cut with Slate River gurgling under an icy shield at our right. The steep mountainside was on the left.

Thus far the 402 had held the rails like her drivers were glued to them. We were moving along about ten miles an hour. Suddenly the 402 began to spin her drivers on the rails. To get sand under her I had to lean forward and grasp my sander lever. As I did so, for no reason whatever, I glanced across the boiler top and through the window on my fireman's side. In that fleeting glance I saw the whole mountainside moving toward us!

My normal reaction would have been to close the throttle and set the air brakes in emergency. Instead, I dove through the cab window on my side. I landed in soft, wet snow and was almost covered with the clammy stuff. Something struck me and kicked me fifteen or twenty feet down the steep embankment. I landed sprawling and buried again. Once more something kicked me out of the way. A third time I was struck and pushed out of the path of my rolling engine. This time I landed on the edge of Slate River. I thrashed my way free of the snow and staggered to my feet. A few feet away lay the 402, upside down! Her drivers were spinning and the side rods threw gouts of snow into the air.

My first thought was for the balance of the men on the two engines. As I blinked the moist snow out of my eyes, I gazed about. Not far away a hand stuck out of the slide and the fingers moved frantically. Hastily I dug down and finally had my fireman's face uncovered so he could breathe again. Lifting

him free of the clinging white blanket took but a few more seconds.

The 274 was on her side above, slewed at an angle to the track. Only the edge of the slide had caught her. The flanger was still coupled to her tender and both dangled down the steep hillside. My 402 had broken loose from the outfit.

Together my fireman and I struggled up to the 274. Her fireman was just clambering out of the gangway. There was no sign of Jap Berryhill, her engineer.

"Jap!" I shouted.

He answered me and his voice sounded muffled. It seemed to come from the right side of the cab, the side underneath the boiler. I maneuvered to where I could peer below and saw him, his face white and twisted with pain. He was flat on his back. "My foot's caught, Lew," he said calmly.

All that time the drivers on the 402 churned as the stout heart of her drained through the cylinders. "Maybe we can get you loose," I suggested.

"I'm afraid not," he gritted with pain. "If you can, do something to keep the water from running under me. A pipe is busted and my thigh is getting scalded."

We quickly located the source of the boiling water and then we hunted up a scoop shovel, hoping to catch it in this. But it proved ineffective. The train crew had come on the scene by that time and one of them was on his way to Crested Butte to get heavy jacks and the switch engine, hoping they might release Jap by jacking up the boiler.

All afternoon we labored there. All afternoon the

scalding water trickled under the engineer. A doctor came down from Crested Butte and gave Jap some pills to ease his pain. He had guts. Not once during all those long, dragging minutes, which extended into hours, did he complain. He lay there and joked with all of us. Then, just as dusk was falling over the scene, we got him free.

We knew that a wrecking outfit had been ordered from Gunnison and was on its way. Uncle Joe Riley, who was the rear brakeman, went back to flag them. We carried Jap and placed him in the baggage car which, along with the coach, was still on the rails.

About 8:00 P. M. we heard the muffled exhausts of two locomotives and knew the wrecker was about to arrive. But another snow slide caught them about a hundred yards from where we were. It completely buried the two engines. Had they not been mud hens, with frames outside their wheels, both would have been swept into Slate River. As it was, the weight of the tons of wet snow only caused them to shudder and squat closer to the rails.

The two mud hens finally managed to wallow out of the slide and couple on the coaches. Then we started back to Gunnison. It was a slow, monotonous drag. In the baggage car the reaction from his burns had set in and Jap was suffering horribly. The doctor gave him a shot of dope and he went to sleep. After that Jap spent eighteen months in the Salida hospital while his deep burns slowly healed. Skin was grafted on him in a dozen places. He was finally released and returned to running an engine again.

At 5:00 A. M. the following morning, my phone

rang. It was the engine crew caller. "You're not laying off, are you, Lathrop?" he asked.

"Nope. I didn't get a scratch yesterday," I told him.

"Then you're called for the rotary at 6:30. The Black Canyon has slid full and yesterday's passenger train is blocked down there," he told me.

"Okay." I took the call.

Anybody who ventured into the Black Canyon that year will never forget the experience. The January thaw had caused the walls of the canyon to vomit hundreds of snow slides. Number 315, the westbound passenger of the day before had got about four miles west of Sapinero when a slide smashed into her. The express messenger was swept out of his car. His body was not found until two years later. A basketball player riding the smoking car was taken by the slide. His body was recovered within a few days. Slides came down behind and in front of the train, completely blocking it. So it was decided to run the rotary and dig them out.

The rotary plow had never been taken west of Gunnison in the history of the narrow gauge. The bridges were too flimsy to support the weight of the ponderous machine. But an emergency was now faced. We headed west, three little engines coupled behind the rotary, and moved slowly over the twin bridges across the Gunnison a mile from town. They groaned and complained under the weight, but held up.

We finally reached Sapinero. There we were told that slides were still thundering into the canyon and that nobody knew whether the passengers and the

crew marooned in the chasm were alive or dead. All telegraph wires were down.

About two miles west of Sapinero was another steel bridge. We shoved the rotary out on this. Suddenly the ties began to break like so many match sticks. The ends jumped up alongside the rotary and the trucks dropped through so the body rested on the understructure.

That is as far as the rotary ever progressed. She was finally jacked back on the rails after new ties were placed beneath.

When we returned to Gunnison that afternoon a wedge plow crew was ordered to try to get to the stalled passenger train. They took the wrecking outfit and the company doctor with them.

They finally smashed their way to the passenger train. For the next seventy-two hours they were stalled there, listening to the constant thunder of running slides, not knowing when one would smash into their outfit.

The evening of their arrival the company doctor walked to the end of the outfit car in which he was staying. He opened the door. Directly in front of him was the next car ahead. Abruptly there came a noise like an explosion. A clammy mist prickled his exposed face and hands. The mist cleared away and the doctor found himself looking at nothing. Another slide had come down and carried the next car out on the ice of the Gunnison River!

The doctor was like a crazy man for a while. The crew members were forced to hold him to keep him from starting back to Sapinero on foot.

I did not accompany the wrecking outfit into the

Courtesy Colin Moore Collection

THREE-RAIL TRACK ON THE DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN

Black Canyon and was not sorry. The following morning I went out on my regular run, using a stand-by engine. The 402 was a sorry-looking wreck as I gazed down at her when we passed. Her cab was completely stripped from the boiler, and her jacket was torn off, as were her headlight and shotgun stack. I felt a distinct pang of sorrow every time we passed her. Almost a month elapsed before she was picked up and towed down to Gunnison.

Shortly before the time of the big slides, the Crystal River Railroad, another narrow-gauge short line, folded up. The D. & R.G. bought all of their motive power, which consisted of three engines. These were larger than our little 400's, but smaller than the mud hens. Two of them weighed about fifty tons. The third was larger and heavier. Our railroad renumbered them the 430, 431, and the 432.

I was told that as soon as the 432, the larger of the three, was ready for service she'd be assigned to the Crested Butte branch. She was rated to pull thirty empties and make running time with them. I was anxious to see her and disgusted with the little 200's I was forced to run, now that my old pet, the 402, was still on the edge of Slate River with only her drivers showing above the snow.

At last the 432 came in from Salida. When I was called to take her out on my run I went down early and looked her over. She was shiny in new black paint and her rods were white. She had the biggest cab I've ever seen on a locomotive. The boiler extended through it and was so high the engineer could just see the top of his fireman's head. A man did not sit down while he was switching. He had to walk

forward to open the throttle and walk back to move the reverse lever. She was the most awkward engine to operate I had ever run. Her frame was outside the wheels, like the mud hens'. I climbed into the gangway and looked into the firebox. It was like looking down a well. It was about four feet from door to flue sheet and about the same distance across. I wondered how the fire cleaners would ever shovel clinkers and ashes out. No shovel was built that would reach to the grates!

In Foreman Weirick's office I found the engineer who had brought her from Salida.

"How did she do, coming over Marshall Pass?" I asked him.

"All I got to say is this—I'm damned glad I don't have to run her back. That engine won't make a pound of steam. We stopped and blowed up about every five miles all the way to the top of the pass. From the size and shape of her firebox, I don't think she can ever be made to steam," he told me.

My enthusiasm for the 432 began to evaporate then and there. I had to have a free-steaming engine to make running time, which meant passenger connections, on the branch. If the 432 wouldn't steam, we'd be in a mess. But she was booked for the branch and I realized that I'd have to make the best of her.

My fireman that morning was Clate Braswell, one of the best men with a scoop shovel on the West End. When he couldn't keep an engine hot, nobody else needed to try.

We lost an hour on running time that day. The 432 would not make a pound of steam. I worked her with a flutter of water in the bottom gauge cock and Clate

fired her every way he knew. From the way she handled, when she had maximum pressure, I was sure she would be a crackerjack if she could only be drafted properly. Back in Gunnison I was notified that we would make a double that night. Clate laid off. He'd had enough of the 432. I drew another good fireman, Beauvais, and it was the same story; blowing up steam about every five or six miles all the way to Crested Butte. The boilermaker had worked on her front end between the doubles, but hadn't helped her any.

For the best part of a week it was the same story. We lost from one to two hours every day. We were delaying the evening passenger train and I was beginning to get some pretty sharp letters from the master mechanic.

Then, one morning, I went down to work to find every fireman out on other runs. I knew I would draw a roundhouse man, and it did not improve my feelings. I asked Weirick, the foreman, about it.

"Yeah, I'll have to give you your kid today, Lew," he told me.

Gilbert had caught a few trips as fireman on the main line. I had been told that he was no world-beater as a fireman. Of course he was green and needed experience.

He came climbing into the cab all excited and tickled to death to be making a trip with his dad. He wet down his coal and cracked a few lumps.

"This engine ain't steaming," I told him. "So don't expect too much out of her."

"I know," he replied. "I'll sure do the best I can."

We coupled on our thirty empties and pulled them

up so the switch crew could put the coaches on the hind end. Then I whistled off. Gilbert got down and began firing like mad. The needle started back and I eased off on my injector. A mile and a half from town I stopped so we could blow up steam, and I could get some water in the boiler.

"How does she seem to be burning her fire?" I asked Gilbert. He was dirty and his eyes were red from looking into the flare of the firebox.

He shook his head dubiously. "Gosh," he answered, "I don't know. All I can see is a white glare."

Knowing he wouldn't be much help, I settled back to wait for steam to rise and the boiler to fill. About forty minutes later we were ready to go again. I could hear Gilbert down in the gangway, talking to himself and slamming his tools around. I realized that he was mad over his poor showing.

I opened the 432 and we started again. I paid no attention to the steam gauge because I knew what was going to happen. All of a sudden the safety valves opened with a roar. I nearly fell off my seat with surprise. I'd never heard the 432 "pop" before! I opened up my injector, knowing that would promptly give her a chill. But it didn't! The safety valves closed, but a squirrel tail of steam oozed from them and the needle on the gauge stayed right at 160 pounds, maximum pressure.

I dropped my reverse lever down so the engine was working in four holes and pulled the throttle wide open. The 432 picked up her train like it was so many feathers. Still the needle stayed at 160! I couldn't believe it. Finally I stepped down into the gangway.

"How in the devil are you firing this engine?" I asked Gilbert.

He had a grin spread all over his face. "I'm darned if I know, Dad," he told me. "I'm just kinda—watch, I'll show you."

He opened the firebox door and lifted a full scoop of coal. Then he dropped it, kerplunk, into the firebox, kind of like a fellow planting potatoes. He plopped another one, and another, without even trying to slide them along the side sheets and under the door. And that kind of coal heaving was literally burning up the 432!

We hadn't gone five miles when the conductor and both of his brakemen came crawling over the empties and into the gangway. They entered the cab and all of them looked at the steam gauge.

I was feeling pretty proud of that boy of mine.

"What happened, Lew?" asked Jerry Brunton.

"I've just got a natural chip-off-the-old-block fireman out with me today, Jerry," I told him.

"You sure have!" he exploded as the safety valves opened with a pleasing roar.

We went into Crested Butte on time. From that day I had no more trouble with the 432 steaming. I told each fireman who came on the job just how to go about putting coal into the firebox. She proved to be the best engine I'd ever run.

From Gunnison the 402 was taken to the back shops in Salida. Later she was sold to the Rio Grande Southern. She was renumbered the 40. There she hauled freight trains over Dallas Divide into Telluride, through Vance Junction and Rico, and into Durango.

CHAPTER XXVII

PASSENGER ENGINEER

WORLD War I showed that the narrow-gauge lines were as vital to the war effort as were the biggest standard-gauge systems. The coal mines in and around Crested Butte shipped one hundred loads a day. Trains of timber, of livestock, of ore and other essential commodities rolled over the three-foot gauge. These were transferred to standard-gauge cars at Salida and Montrose.

A large number of our younger employees went into military service, leaving us very shorthanded. But to our credit we carried on and managed to move the tremendous volume of freight.

In 1917, my son, Gilbert, was promoted to brakeman, after having worked in the roundhouse almost four years. A ruling which forbid sons or other blood relatives to work in the same service on the same division barred him from going firing. He joined the U. S. Army in August of that year.

In 1924 Gilbert was promoted to conductor, and it was my pleasure to pull his trains on many occasions.

The dreams of all young men who go into engine

service is that day when they have finally worked up enough seniority to pull a passenger train. Early in the 1900's the D.& R.G. had standard-gauged from Grand Junction to Montrose, and also on the North Fork branch. The narrow gauge passenger division west of Gunnison extended to Ouray, via Montrose, which was a three-rail yard.

In 1922, after forty years of service, I found myself with seniority enough to hold a passenger run out of Gunnison. George Porter, the engineer with whom I had come to the Gunnison country, had been pensioned. George Arteberry, "the Little Giant," who had been pulling passenger west of Gunnison, had finally become the oldest engineer on our district.

Only one job remained on the Third Division which was better than the passenger run out of Gunnison, and that was the standard-gauge passenger run from Grand Junction to Montrose. The oldest engineer always held this run.

My new engine was the 169. Those of you who attended the New York World's Fair in 1939 and visited the transportation exhibit must have seen her there. The D. & R.G. put a diamond stack on her, but did not shorten her front end. When I saw her picture she looked wrong. I suppose few persons noticed this oversight.

The 169 and I pounded through the Black Canyon and over Cerro Summit day after day. She was temperamental and had to be babied over the road.

The little twenty-five-ton 169 would click off a mile a minute anytime I gave her her head. She did it with little exertion, having four-foot drivers and excellent valve motion.

While I was on this passenger run I noticed with increasing regularity the name of Texas Guinan in the newspapers. It made me remember back to the early 1900's. Mrs. Mack, who ran the section house in Cimarron, was Tex Guinan's aunt and the young beauty came to visit her. At that time Tex was unknown, having played only bit parts on the stage. She had been born in Texas and had a Southern drawl, thus her nickname. She was one of the most ravishing girls I've ever seen, and she became a favorite around Cimarron. When her visit with her aunt ended, everybody hated to see her go.

The next time I saw her she was the star in a show that was playing in Denver. But she was the same Tex Guinan and insisted that my wife and I come and see her performance. She had married a cartoonist in Denver, but was separated from him then.

I also knew Jack Dempsey, from the days he worked on the Gunnison Tunnel when it was being built.

The old-timers were beginning to go. Those men who had seen the building of the narrow gauge and had helped operate it were becoming fewer and fewer. I had long since shaved off my mustache and my hair was growing pretty white around the edge.

In 1927 George Arteberry was pensioned. I found myself the oldest engineer on the narrow gauge. I can add that I was also the oldest engineer in point of service on the entire Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. My next step was the standard-gauge passenger run out of Grand Junction.

I had been running narrow-gauge engines almost

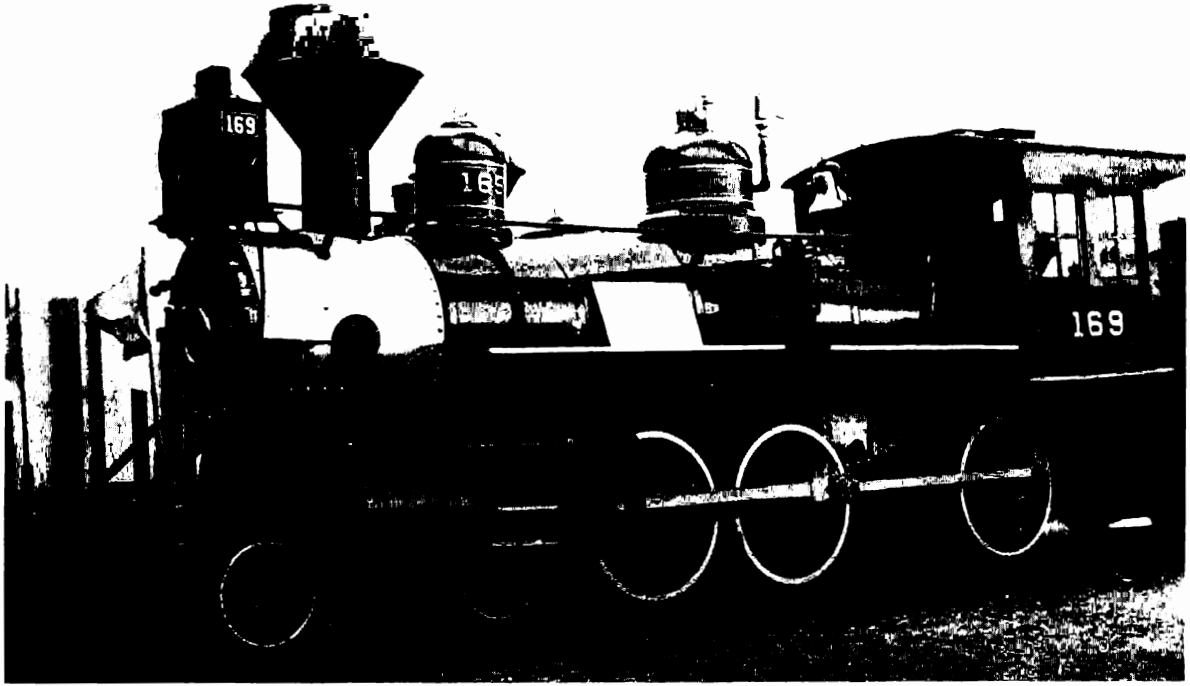


Photo by A. J. Fregans

NO. 169 AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, AUGUST, 1939

forty-five years, but had never opened the throttle on a standard-gauge one. I went to Grand Junction and okayed for the run. It was all new to me and I was quite a while getting accustomed to the high wheels, the superheaters, the ET brakes, the steam heat, and all the other improvements unknown on the narrow gauge. The running time was fast. I had to average about forty-five miles an hour to make it.

On this new run an old fellow named Bob Laurie was my fireman until he was pensioned. Bob was quite a character. He had been the oldest fireman on the division for years, having given up his rights as an engineer after getting into some kind of a mix-up when he ran a switch engine. Bob had a mania for saving his money. When the Elks' Lodge built their home in Grand Junction he loaned them a large sum. His one object in life was to get his pension when he was seventy years old and then buy a pair of spats, a gold-headed cane, and a diamond stud. While on duty Bob looked like a tramp. He wore a rope around his middle to hold in his corpulent stomach. He never married. He ate frugally. But he did give financial help to many widows who had children.

Bob lived to attain his lifelong dream. When he was finally pensioned he came down to visit me dressed up like a dude, gold-headed cane, gray spats, diamond stud, and all. But he lived to enjoy them less than a year.

Like all engineers, I had trouble with the drivers of automobiles who tried to contest the right of way with me. One fellow deliberately drove his car into the side of my engine when we were pulling into

Olathe one day. The street was clear and unobstructed for several blocks on both sides of the track. Fortunately none of the occupants of the car was injured.

Another fellow was driving a Fordson tractor. The track was straight and he was crossing a field. I noticed that he kept looking toward the west and never once glanced in the direction from which we approached. I was running about fifty miles per hour. He kept right on moving toward the track. I pulled a long, warning blast on my whistle. He did not hear it. I saw that I was going to hit him, so I tied down my whistle cord. When my engine was less than ten feet from him he heard her. I've never seen a man unload as fast as he did. His tractor was in the middle of the track when we hit it. It smashed the pilot on the engine, but, fortunately, did not go under and derail us. Little was left of the tractor save scrap iron. I stopped as quick as I could and backed up to where the driver stood beside the track.

"Are you hurt?" I called down to him.

He shook his head. "Guess not," he reckoned.

"Looks like you'd have seen us coming," I told him.

"Well, I didn't know you'd went up yet today, an' I was watchin' for you from the other direction. My motor made so much racket I didn't hear you whistle. I won't make any kind of a damage claim."

I heard later that the company gave him fifty dollars voluntarily.

"Sun dogs" gave us a good deal of trouble. They're also called "sun kinks." They are caused by an extremely hot sun expanding the rails until they run into an abrupt kink. Sometimes they're S-shaped.

Other times they're short half-circles. The advent of anticreepers and steel tie plates, plus rock ballast, have almost eliminated them from modern-day railroading.

I hit a sun kink one day, making about forty miles an hour. We were on it before we saw it. I'll never know how my engine went over it without leaving the rails, but, luckily, she did.

Another day I smashed into a two-hundred-foot-long mud slide, about four feet deep. My engine was halfway through it before we got halted. The pilot was ruined and the pony-truck wheels were driven back a couple of feet. The wrecking outfit had to come from Grand Junction to extricate us.

During the late 1920's the Denver & Rio Grande Western rehabilitated their standard-gauge main line between Denver and Salt Lake City at a cost of several millions of dollars. They laid heavier rails, ballasted the track, lengthened curves, and cut down grades.

Then came a bunch of new locomotives, modern juggernauts, massive passenger engines and mammoth freight hogs. I saw them working through Grand Junction and the sight of them brought back memories of the little Montezuma, the 13, the 26 and the 57, and all the host of tiny narrow-gauge locomotives long since scrapped. My heart went out to the little fellows. They made possible these modern giants of the rails. Those tiny engines made money every time their drivers turned. That money went into buying larger engines, into improving roadbeds, bridges, grades . . . .

We might say the spirits of all of those hundreds of pigmy locomotives are in today's ponderous power.

The first Burlington Zephyr came through Grand Junction on her exhibition run. All of us old steam heads turned out to see this new train. To us, the Diesel-electric units composing the motive power were not locomotives. They were glorified streetcars. But that streamlined, articulated train represented a brand-new departure in railroading. I was not sorry I was rapidly approaching my retirement age.

I was seventy three years old before I finally laid off and came home to Gunnison. I was not pensioned as yet, although the railroad company had been pensioning employees when they reached seventy for some time. Now, in 1935, the Federal government was taking over the pensioning of railroad employees and the railroad company was waiting for them to take action.

On May 31, 1935, I climbed into the cab of engine 784 and pulled away from the depot in Grand Junction. Hugh Gallager, the oldest conductor on the division, was running the crew. Hugh had gone to work for the railroad as a water boy when he was thirteen. I went into Montrose on time. After turning our train on the wye we headed back to Grand Junction. Conductor Frank Perkins, the same man who figured in the dramatic runaway on Marshall Pass years and years ago, was the skipper going back.

We went into Grand Junction at 6:20 P. M., on time. I am glad I brought my train in on time that final trip.

Behind me were fifty-three years of service with the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. I was just a little weary of the pound of drivers on steel

rails, of the blast of exhausts, the blare of the air port. In one way I was not sorry it was finally over.

And yet, today, after almost five years of being on the pension rolls, every engine whistle brings back some memory out of the past. They bring back the wish, even though I know it can never be fulfilled, that I might climb into the cab of one of my ancient pets and grasp her throttle and again feel the surge of power when her little drive wheels grip the rails and we move off, down the shining High Iron.

Those were glorious days of high adventure, of thrills, of danger, and of pleasure. I've a stack of letters, like:

"Your personal record has been credited with thirty-five merit marks for one year's clear record."

"Your personal record has been credited with twenty-five merit marks for bringing your train to Gunnison when fireman became ill and unable to fire locomotive."

"Your personal record has been credited with twenty-five merit marks for assisting in extinguishing fire on Bridge 289-A."

And I've those letters from the officials complimenting me on my long years of service with the company when I was finally pensioned.

Any man can well be proud who can look back over half a century of service with the same corporation, and know that his work was well done.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CONCLUSION

IT was after Lewis R. Lathrop, my father, came home to stay in June, 1935, that he began telling of his experiences in growing up with the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. They were thrilling experiences, vividly told; far too interesting to be forgotten. I began setting them down as he related them.

Railroad Stories accepted the first of the series. I had titled it "My Narrow Gauge Album," and signed it "by Lewis R. Lathrop." Dad was pleased when I told him a part of his story would be published in a national magazine. When the first part appeared showing him as the author, he called me down to his home. He pointed to his name on the title page.

"I don't like this kind of notoriety, Gilbert," he began angrily.

"But I think it's great, Dad," I soothed him. "After all, it's your story. You're the one who lived it. I did only the mechanical end of it."

"I'm liable to get a bunch of these fan letters," he grumbled. "If I do, I can't answer them. Writing is too hard any more, because my hand ain't steady."

"I'll answer your fan mail, Dad," I promised.

I supposed he would get probably a dozen letters out of the story. But I was mistaken. When the letters began arriving, eighteen to twenty a day, all of them enthusiastic over Dad's story, I knew the things he had narrated were as fascinating to others as they had been to me.

Dad's story appeared in four issues of *Railroad Stories*. But there was so much they did not print that I decided there was material for a book in the story of Colorado's narrow gauges. I contacted other old-time narrow-gauge railroaders and listened to their early-day experiences. Much of that material has never before appeared in print. For that part which was published in *Railroad Stories*, I am indebted to Popular Publications, Inc., of New York. And I am grateful to Freeman H. Hubbard, at that time the editor, who gathered some of the historical data appearing herein.

Dad was tired when he finally came home for good. His life had been one of long hours and hard work. But his heart was still with his beloved railroad. His eyes would light when he heard the Crested Butte train whistle into town of an evening, or the little five-car passenger train blow in from the west.

On the evening of November 7, 1940, a tired old man went to bed and did not awaken next morning. Lew Lathrop was seventy-eight years of age.

But with the passing of Dad, the story of Colorado's narrow gauges was not yet complete.

The original main line extending from Salida, via Marshall Pass and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, to Ouray, still operated. The depression of the 1930's

had taken its toll. The thirty-six-mile Lake City branch had been abandoned and the rails torn up. The Pitkin branch, originally part of the main line of the Denver, South Park & Pacific, and leased by the Denver and Rio Grande after the abandonment by its parent company, had given up the ghost. Only the Crested Butte and the Baldwin branches operated out of Gunnison, and both of them with greatly curtailed service.

It was not until the late 1940's that the D. & R.G. W. asked for the abandonment of the Third Division from Sapinero, twenty-five miles west of Gunnison, to Cedar Creek, ten miles east of Montrose. This meant the line through the Black Canyon and over Cerro Summit.

The Interstate Commerce Commission finally gave its consent and in 1949 the rails were torn up and twenty-seven of the most scenic miles of this colorful little pioneer railroad were gone.

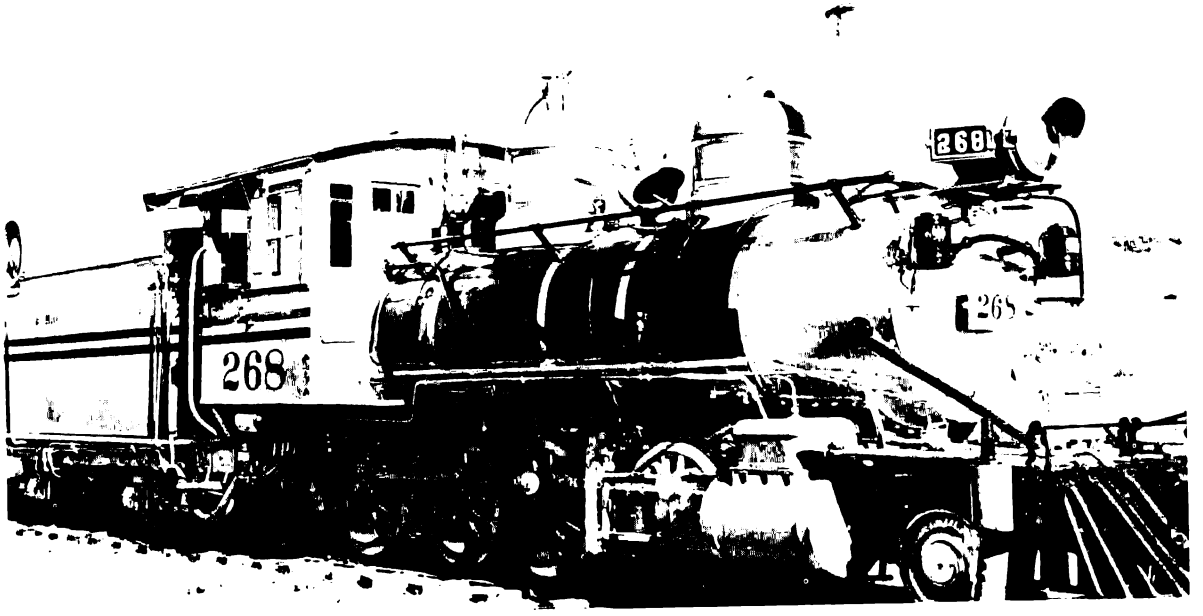
The Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Company gave to the people of Colorado the nine steel bridges in the Black Canyon, to become part of a highway which would give tourists and trout-fishing enthusiasts access to this superb stretch of waters. Today one may drive the crooked, breath-taking fifteen miles of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and use the same steel railroad trestles that vibrated to the tread of countless thousands of narrow-gauge trains for over sixty years.

On Friday, February 2, 1951, the last narrow-gauge passenger train operating in the United States made its farewell run between Alamosa and Durango, Colorado. Over a period of years this train had been op-

Coutesy Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad

RIO GRANDE MANIFEST FREIGHT LEAVING GLENWOOD SPRINGS, COLORADO, WESTWARD BOUND ON THE MAIN-LINE TRACK

Mount Sopris in the center background



[illegible] FOR THE MOVIE ROLE IN "DENVER & RIO GRANDE"

erating at a loss, although the equipment had been completely modernized. The coaches were vestibuled, electrically lighted, and steam heated. They carried a buffet car in which passengers could enjoy wholesome food at nominal costs.

Also, in 1951, Nat Holt produced a technicolor film. The name of this movie was "The Denver & Rio Grande." The picture was filmed on the Silverton branch, where Dad found the time lock in the Animas River. Engine 268, one of the few remaining thirty-ton Baldwin 2-8-0's, was dolled up to play the part between her regular duties of hauling trains of lumber and livestock between Sapinero and Gunnison on the Gunnison branch.

This writer saw her in the roundhouse in Gunnison in 1952. She still wore her gaudy dress. Aside from that, she was the same little locomotive that pulled him many miles during the years he served as a conductor on the narrow gauge back in the 1920's.

In September, 1952, the Rio Grande Southern, where Dad was borrowed to run a work-train engine during construction in the 1890's, was junked by the Hyman Michaels Company, of Chicago, who had purchased it for $409,000. Thus the engineering marvel built by Otto Mears became only a legend.

I know that Dad would be happy and proud if he knew that his old pet, the 402, which was renumbered the 40 after she was sold to the Rio Grande Southern, was subsequently purchased by Knott's Berry Farm of Buena Park, California, which is near Los Angeles. Along with several little coaches, a few of the original railroad buildings, a water tank, and other historical equipment, she was moved and set up there. Today,

the 402, still numbered the 40, wearing another diamond stack but otherwise unchanged, is the most photographed narrow-gauge locomotive in the world. She hauls countless thousands of tourists and vacationers around a circular track as valiantly as she pulled trains of empty coal cars up the Crested Butte branch, and brought back loaded ones under the watchful eyes of Lew Lathrop.

I like to think that the spirit of Dad comes back to ride the cab of his old pet as she proudly chuffs her way through Buena Park.

The D. & R.G.W. has petitioned the I.C.C. for permission to abandon the last remaining link of the original narrow-gauge main line between Salida and Gunnison, via Marshall Pass, this abandonment to include the Baldwin and Crested Butte branches. There is little doubt that this permission will be given. Thus, the roaring little thirty-six-inch-gauge railroad will have become history.

The narrow gauge between Durango and Alamosa, via Cumbres Pass will remain, as a freight-only line.

The narrow gauge railway projected by General William J. Palmer in 1871 is today a connecting, transcontinental link between San Francisco, California, and Chicago, Illinois. The original route from Denver to Salt Lake City, via the Royal Gorge and Tennessee Pass, is augmented by the Moffat Tunnel route which literally goes *through* rather than over, or around, the Rockies. The six-mile Moffat Tunnel, one of the engineering marvels of the 1920's, shortens the distance between Denver and Salt Lake City by almost one hundred miles.

The walls of the Royal Gorge echo to the roar of

Diesel-electric passenger and freight locomotives as they haul their trains toward the Continental Divide.

So the modern Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad can be likened to a lariat with a loop on one end, the loop representing the two alternate routes, one via the Moffat Tunnel, the other via the Royal Gorge. At the station of Dotsero, on the Western slope, the two lines converge and extend westward to Ogden, Utah, via Salt Lake City.

At Salt Lake City the D. & R.G.W. connects with the Western Pacific Railroad, another ultramodern transportation system. This 928-mile-long railroad is completely dieselized. One of the most beautiful streamlined passenger trains in America, the California Zephyr, with her vista-domed coaches operates daily between San Francisco, California, and Chicago, Illinois, a distance of 2,537 miles, making the west-east run in 52 hours and 30 minutes. On the east-west run this train consumes 49 hours and 20 minutes. The route of this rolling palace on wheels is San Francisco to Salt Lake City via the Western Pacific, Salt Lake City to Denver via the Denver & Rio Grande Western, and Denver to Chicago via the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy.

These three railroad systems move freight from Chicago to San Francisco in six days.

What a startling contrast would be formed were it possible to conjure out of the past one of those Raymond-Whitcomb Excursion trains of the 1880's, with ornate narrow-gauge Pullmans, tourist sleepers, and dining cars, and set it alongside the stainless-steel California Zephyr!

Certainly railroading has come a long, long way

since the day those blue-blooded Bostonians witnessed the foot race between the Indian bucks at Margo, and the present, when 4,500 dieselized-electric horses purr their effortless way through the scenic Feather River Canyon, and the Colorado Rockies with their vista-domed, de luxe passenger trains.

I spent my vacation in Colorado in September, 1954. Gunnison had become another little city without a railroad. For over eight months no narrow-gauge whistle had echoed from the flank of Tenderfoot Mountain. The once busy main line was overgrown with weeds. The rails were rusted. Permission to abandon the Gunnison branch over Marshall Pass had been given by the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1953.

In the boarded-up roundhouse in Gunnison one little locomotive, the 268, known as "Cinderella" to the home folks, brooded in solitude over a pit, visited only by the ghosts of her youth.

From the *Gunnison Courier* of Sunday, October 3, 1954, I quote:

"Frank Wright, who was engineer on the last narrow gauge train out of Ouray and also took the last train that went from Cedar Creek to Montrose, was in Gunnison this week to bring the last cars out of Iola and Gunnison points on the last trip before the 'breakup train' comes through.

"Narrow gauge rolling stock now being pulled out of Gunnison is scheduled to be taken to Salida, renovated, and shipped overseas."

And so the original east-west narrow-gauge main line of the D. & R. G. will have become but a memory.

"Finis" has been written.